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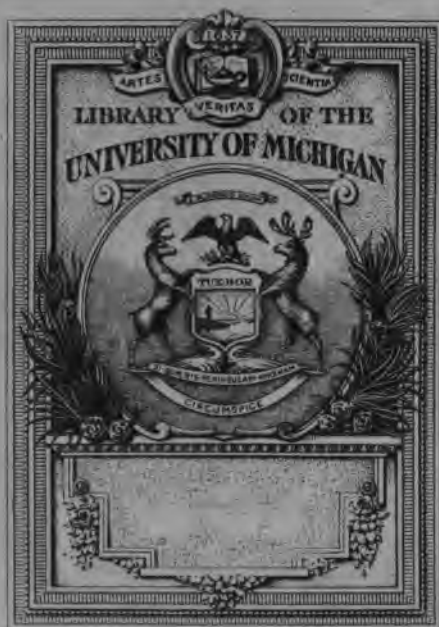
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*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*

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ENGLISH AND  
AMERICAN  
LITERATURE

STUDIES IN LITERARY  
CRITICISM, INTER-  
PRETATION AND  
HISTORY

+

By C. H. SYLVESTER

*Formerly Professor of Literature and  
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School at Stevens  
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+

INCLUDING COMPLETE  
MASTERPIECES

+

IN TEN VOLUMES  
*With Numerous Halftone Illustrations*  
VOLUME SIX, DRAMA

CHICAGO  
SMITH & REEVE  
1904

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## **The Drama**

**William Shakespeare**

## **Review Questions**

## **Studies in Macbeth**

11-10-05

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# Part Eleven

## The Drama

11-10-05





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# Macbeth

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



## Introductory Note

---

The tragedy of Macbeth is one of the most intensely dramatic of Shakespeare's plays and while it offers as clear a field as any for the study of character, it is at the same time easily read.

The notes are intended to define such words as are not readily found in the dictionary, and to give an intelligent reading of obscure passages.

In the preparation of the play, we have been deeply indebted to the *Variorum Edition of Macbeth* by H. H. Furness (Lippincott & Co.) in which are gathered with the most discriminating taste all the notes and information worthy to be included in such a book. We have in the main followed the text he approves. We have also availed ourselves of the assistance of several excellent school editions of the play.

The student should first read the play to the end to get a general idea of the plot. It is better to do this in one continuous reading. Little attention need be paid to the notes except when they are necessary to make clear the course of events. A second reading should follow in which all the notes are used and the student weighs for himself the meaning of the sentences to see that all is clear. Then he will be ready for the more detailed studies that follow in Part Twelve.



## Dramatis Personae

---

- DUNCAN, King of Scotland.
- MALCOLM,                     { his sons.
- DONALBAIN,                 {
- MACBETH,                    { generals of the king's army.
- BANQUO,                    {
- MACDUFF,                    {
- LENNOX,                     {
- ROSS,                        { noblemen of Scotland.
- MENTEITH,                 {
- ANGUS,                     {
- CAITHNESS,                 {
- FLEANCE, son to Banquo.
- SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland, general of the  
English forces.
- YOUNG SIWARD, his son.
- SEYTON, an officer attending on Macbeth.
- BOY, son to Macduff.
- An English Doctor.
- A Scotch Doctor.
- A Sergeant.
- A Porter.
- An Old Man.
- LADY MACBETH.
- LADY MACDUFF.
- Gentlewomen attending on Lady Macbeth.
- HECATE.
- Three Witches.
- Apparitions.
- Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers,  
Attendants and Messengers.

*SCENE: Scotland; England.*

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

## Act I

### SCENE I. *A Desert Place.*

*Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches.*

*First Witch.* When shall we three meet  
again

In thunder, lightning, or in rain ?

*Sec. Witch.* When the hurly-burly's done,  
When the battle's lost and won.

*Third Witch.* That will be ere the set of  
sun.

*First Witch.* Where the place ?

*Sec. Witch.* Upon the heath.

*Third Witch.* There to meet with Mac-  
beth.

*First Witch.* I come, Graymalkin !<sup>1</sup>

*Sec. Witch.* Paddock<sup>2</sup> calls.

*Third Witch.* Anon.<sup>3</sup>

*All.* Fair is foul, and foul is fair :<sup>4</sup>  
Hover through the fog and filthy air. [*Exeunt.*]

---

1. The spirit that speaks to the witch in the form of a gray cat.

2. A spirit in form of a toad.

3. In a moment; meaning, I will come in a minute.

4. To us, fair is foul, etc.

SCENE II. *A Camp near Forres.*<sup>5</sup>

*Alarum within. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Sergeant.*

*Dun.* What bloody man is that? He can report,  
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt  
The newest state.<sup>6</sup>

*Mal.* This is the sergeant<sup>7</sup>  
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought  
'Gainst my captivity — Hail, brave friend!  
Say to the king the knowledge of the broil  
As thou didst leave it.

*Ser.* Doubtful it stood;  
As two spent swimmers that do cling together  
And choke their art.<sup>8</sup> The merciless Macdon-  
wald —

Worthy to be a rebel, for to that<sup>9</sup>  
The multiplying villanies of nature  
Do swarm upon him — from the western  
isles<sup>10</sup>

---

5. A town in Scotland, near Inverness. "Near by is 'Sweno's Pillar,' an ancient obelisk probably commemorating some victory over the Danes. Not far off is a 'blasted heath,' treeless, shrubless, one of the dreariest moors in Scotland." — Sprague.

6. Can give the latest news.

7. An officer probably of higher rank in Shakespeare's time than now.

8. Destroy their skill.

9. For to that end.

10. Hebrides.

Of kerns<sup>11</sup> and gallowglasses<sup>12</sup> is supplied;  
And Fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,<sup>13</sup>  
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too  
weak:

For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that  
name —

Disdaining Fortune, with his brandish'd steel,  
Which smok'd with bloody execution,  
Like valour's minion carv'd out his passage  
Till he fac'd the slave;

Which<sup>14</sup> ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell  
to him,

Till he unseam'd him<sup>15</sup> from the nave to the  
chaps,

And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

*Dun.* O valiant cousin!<sup>16</sup> worthy gentleman!

*Ser.* As whence the sun gins his reflection<sup>17</sup>

Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders  
breaking —

So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to  
come

---

11. Soldiers, armed with light darts or daggers.

12. Heavy-armed men. Probably both classes were from Ireland.

13. Smiled and deceived him.

14. Who.

15. By a terrible upward blow of the sword.

16. Duncan and Macbeth were grandsons of King Malcolm.

17. Begins his turning back. That is, as spring begins with the storms of the vernal equinox, when the sun is passing north from the equator.

Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland,  
mark:

No sooner justice had with valour arm'd  
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their  
heels,

But the Norweyan<sup>18</sup> lord, surveying vantage,<sup>19</sup>  
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men  
Began a fresh assault.

*Dun.* Dismay'd not this  
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

*Ser.* Yes;  
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.  
If I say sooth, I must report they were  
As cannons<sup>20</sup> overcharg'd with double cracks;<sup>21</sup>  
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:  
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,  
Or memorize another Golgotha,<sup>22</sup>  
I cannot tell —

But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

*Dun.* So well thy words become thee as thy  
wounds;

---

18. Norwegian — *Holinshead*.

19. Seeing his chance.

20. An anachronism; that is, Shakespeare puts into the mouth of the sergeant a word not known at that time.

21. A word of emphasis and dignity in Shakespeare's time. "Charged with double thunder." — *Johnson*.

22. Makes the battlefield as memorable as the place where Christ was crucified.

## SCENE II

## Macbeth

They smack of honour both. — Go get him  
surgeons.

[*Exit Sergeant, attended.*]

Who comes here ?

*Enter Ross.*

*Mal.* The worthy thane<sup>23</sup> of Ross.

*Len.* What haste looks through his eyes !  
so should he look

That seems to speak things strange.

*Ross.* God save the king !

*Dun.* Whence camest thou, worthy thane ?

*Ross.* From Fife,<sup>24</sup> great king ;  
Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky  
And fan our people cold.<sup>25</sup> Norway himself,<sup>26</sup>  
With terrible numbers,  
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,  
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;  
Till that Bellona's bridegroom,<sup>27</sup> lapped in  
proof,<sup>28</sup>

---

23. Thegn — "An Anglo-Saxon nobleman, inferior in rank to an earl."  
— *Bosworth*.

24. This battlefield was perhaps a hundred miles from the other. Fife  
is a peninsula of eastern Scotland, north of Edinburgh.

25. "The meaning seems to be - - the standards being taken by Dun-  
can's forces, and fixed in the ground, the colors idly flapped about,  
serving only to cool the conquerors instead of being proudly displayed  
by their former possessors." — *Malone*.

26. The King of Norway.

27. Bellona was the Roman goddess of war, the sister and wife of  
Mars. Macbeth is supposed to be newly married to the goddess of war.

28. Wearing armor that had been proved before.

Confronted him with self-comparisons,<sup>29</sup>  
 Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,  
 Curbing his lavish spirit:<sup>30</sup> and, to conclude,  
 The victory fell on us.

*Dun.* Great happiness!

*Ross.* That now<sup>31</sup>  
 Sweno, the Norway's king, craves com-  
 position;<sup>32</sup>

Nor would we deign him burial of his men  
 Till he disbursed at Saint Colme's Inch<sup>33</sup>  
 Ten thousand dollars<sup>34</sup> to our general use.

*Dun.* No more that thane of Cawdor shall  
 deceive  
 Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present  
 death,  
 And with his former title greet Macbeth.

*Ross.* I'll see it done.

*Dun.* What he hath lost noble Macbeth  
 hath won.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *A Heath.*

*Thunder. Enter the three Witches.*

*First Witch.* Where hast thou been, sister?

29. Both were Scotch and armed alike.

30. "Reckless daring,"—*Hudson*.

31. So that now.

32. Begs for terms of peace.

33. Inchcolm is a small island in the Frith, near Edinburgh.

34. A great anachronism, to use the word "dollar," but of no serious importance as affecting the play.

## SCENE III

## Macbeth

*Sec. Witch.* Killing swine.<sup>35</sup>

*Third Witch.* Sister, where thou?

*First Witch.* A sailor's wife had chestnuts  
in her lap.

And mounch'd,<sup>36</sup> and mounch'd, and mounch'd.

'Give me,' quoth I:

'Aroint<sup>37</sup> thee, witch!' the rump-fed<sup>38</sup> ronyon<sup>39</sup>  
cries.

Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the  
Tiger:

But in a sieve<sup>40</sup> I'll thither sail,

And, like a rat without a tail,<sup>41</sup>

I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.<sup>42</sup>

*Sec. Witch.* I'll give thee a wind.<sup>43</sup>

*First Witch.* Thou'rt kind.

*Third Witch.* And I another.

*First Witch.* I myself have all the other,  
And the very ports they blow,

35. Witches were much "suspected of malice against swine."—"A  
cow could not be ill of measles . . . but some old woman was charged  
with witchcraft."—*Harsnet*.

36. Chewed with her lips shut.

37. Stand off, get out of the way.

38. Fat and fed on the best. The witch begged a chestnut.

39. Scabby woman.

40. Women accused of witchcraft had confessed that they went to  
sea in sieves.

41. "It should be remembered that though a witch could assume the  
form of any animal she pleased, the tail would still be wanting."—  
*Steevens*.

42. "She threatens, in the shape of a rat, to gnaw through the hull of  
the Tiger."—*Clarendon*.

43. To help her sail after the Tiger.



All the quarters that they know  
I' the shipman's card.<sup>44</sup>  
I'll drain him dry as hay:  
Sleep shall neither night nor day  
Hang upon his pent-house lid;<sup>45</sup>  
He shall live a man forbid:<sup>46</sup>  
Weary se'nnights<sup>47</sup> nine times nine  
Shall he dwindle,<sup>48</sup> peak<sup>49</sup> and pine:  
Though his bark can not be lost,  
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.  
Look what I have.

*Sec. Witch.* Show me, show me.

*First Witch.* Here I have a pilot's thumb,  
Wreck'd as homeward he did come.

[*Drum within.*]

*Third Witch.* A drum, a drum!  
Macbeth doth come.

*All.* The weird sisters, hand in hand,  
Posters<sup>50</sup> of the sea and land,  
Thus do go about, about:  
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,

44. I have control of the other winds and the points from which they blow as shown on the cards carried by the sailors, that is, by the charts.

45. Eye-lid, "His brows, like two steep penthouses, hung down over his eyelids."—Drayton's *David and Goliath*.

46. Under a curse.

47. Seven nights — weeks.

48. By means of wax figures which the witches slowly melted they were believed to be able to cause their enemies to waste away or wither.

49. To grow sharp-featured.

50. Rapid couriers.

## SCENE III

## Macbeth

And thrice again, to make up nine.<sup>51</sup>  
Peace! the charm's wound up.

*Enter MACBETH and BANQUO.*

*Macb.* So foul and fair a day<sup>52</sup> I have not  
seen.

*Ban.* How far is't call'd to Forres? What  
are these  
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,  
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,  
And yet are on't?—Live you? or are you  
aught  
That man may question? You seem to under-  
stand me,  
By each at once her choppy finger laying  
Upon her skinny lips: you should be  
women,  
And yet your beards<sup>53</sup> forbid me to interpret  
That you are so.

*Macb.* Speak, if you can: what are you?

*First Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee,  
thane of Glamis!<sup>54</sup>

---

51. "They here take hold of hands and dance round in a ring nine times, three rounds for each witch. Multiples of three and nine were specially affected by witches ancient and modern."—*Clarendon*.

52. In weather; so foul because of the witches' presence, and fair because of the victory.

53. All witches were supposed to be bearded.

54. Pronounced in Scotland as a monosyllable with the *a* as in *alms*.  
"The thaneship of Glamis was the ancient inheritance of Macbeth's

*Sec. Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee,  
thane of Cawdor!

*Third Witch.* All hail, Macbeth, that shalt  
be king hereafter!

*Ban.* Good sir, why do you start and seem  
to fear  
Things that do sound so fair?—I' the name  
of truth

Are ye fantastical,<sup>55</sup> or that indeed  
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner  
You greet with present grace and great pre-  
diction

Of noble having and of royal hope,  
That he seems rapt<sup>56</sup> withal: to me you speak  
not.

If you can look into the seeds of time,  
And say which grain will grow and which will  
not,

Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear  
Your favors nor your hate.

*First Witch.* Hail!

*Sec. Witch.* Hail!

*Third Witch.* Hail!

*First Witch.* Lesser than Macbeth, and  
greater.

family. The castle where they lived is still standing."—*Stevens*. On  
the coast north of Dundee.

55. Creatures of the imagination.

56. Entranced.

## SCENE III

## Macbeth

*Sec. Witch.* Not so happy, yet much happier.

*Third Witch.* Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none: So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

*First Witch.* Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

*Macb.* Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:

By Sinel's<sup>57</sup> death I know I am thane of Glamis;

But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,

A prosperous gentleman;<sup>58</sup> and to be king  
Stands not within the prospect of belief,  
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence

You owe this strange intelligence? or why  
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way  
With such prophetic greeting? speak, I charge you. [ *Witches vanish.*

*Ban.* The earth hath bubbles as the water has,  
And these are of them. Whither are they  
vanish'd?

---

<sup>57</sup>. Macbeth's father.

<sup>58</sup>. This can scarcely be reconciled with the description of Macbeth's battle with the thane of Cawdor as described by Ross to King Duncan.

**Macbeth**

**ACT I**

*Macb.* Into the air; and what seem'd corporal<sup>59</sup> melted  
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

*Ban.* Were such things here as we do speak about?  
Or have we eaten on the insane root<sup>60</sup>  
That takes the reason prisoner?

*Macb.* Your children shall be kings.

*Ban.* You shall be king.

*Macb.* And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

*Ban.* To the selfsame tune and words.  
Who's here?

*Enter Ross and ANGUS.*

*Ross.* The king hath happily received,  
Macbeth,  
The news of thy success; and when he reads  
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,  
His wonders and his praises do contend  
Which should be thine or his: silenc'd with  
that,  
In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,  
He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,

---

59. Embodied in flesh.

60. Probably the deadly nightshade. "This kinde of Nightshade causeth sleepe, troubleth the minde, bringeth madness, if a fewe of the berries be inwardly taken."—*Gerarde*.

## SCENE III

## Macbeth

Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,  
Strange images of death. As thick as hail  
Came post with post, and every one did bear  
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defense,  
And pour'd them down before him.

*Ang.* We are sent  
To give thee from our royal master thanks;  
Only to herald thee into his sight,  
Not pay thee.

*Ross.* And for an earnest<sup>61</sup> of a greater  
honour,  
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Caw-  
dor:  
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane !  
For it is thine.

*Ban.* [*Aside.*] What, can the devil speak  
true ?

*Macb.* The thane of Cawdor lives: why  
do you dress me  
In borrow'd robes.

*Ang.* Who was the thane lives yet,  
But under heavy judgment bears that life  
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was  
combin'd  
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel  
With hidden help and vantage, or that with  
both

---

61. Money given to bind a bargain.

He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not;  
But treason's capital, confess'd and prov'd,  
Have overthrown him.

*Macb.* [*Aside.*] Glamis, and thane of  
Cawdor!

The greatest is behind.<sup>62</sup>—Thanks for your  
pains.—

Do you not hope your children shall be kings,  
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor  
to me

Promis'd no less to them?

*Ban.* That trusted home  
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,<sup>63</sup>  
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis  
strange:

And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,  
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,  
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's  
In deepest consequence.—

Cousins,<sup>64</sup> a word, I pray you.

*Macb.* [*Aside.*] Two truths are told,  
As happy prologues to the swelling act  
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentle-  
men.

[*Aside.*] This supernatural soliciting

---

62. Still to be disclosed.

63. Excite you to hope for the crown.

64. A general term, not literal in its meaning here.

## SCENE III

## Macbeth

Cannot be ill, cannot be good; if ill,  
Why hath it given me earnest of success,  
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of  
Cawdor:

If good, why do I yield to that suggestion  
Whose horrid image doth unfix<sup>65</sup> my hair  
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,  
Against the use of nature? Present fears  
Are less than horrible imaginings:  
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,  
Shakes so my single state of man<sup>66</sup> that function<sup>67</sup>

Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is  
But what is not.

*Ban.* Look how our partner's rapt.

*Macb.* [*Aside.*] If chance will have me  
king, why, chance may crown me,  
Without my stir.<sup>68</sup>

*Ban.* New honours come upon him,  
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their  
mould

But with the aid of use.

*Macb.* [*Aside.*] Come what come may,

65. Cause my hair to stand on end.

66. Unsupported manhood.

67. "All powers of action are oppressed and crushed by one overwhelming image in the mind, and nothing is present to me but that which is really future, of things now about me. I have no perception, being intent wholly on that which has yet no existence." — *Johnson*.

68. Without any aid from me.



Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.<sup>69</sup>

*Ban.* Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.<sup>70</sup>

*Macb.* Give me your favor :<sup>71</sup> my dull brain was wrought<sup>72</sup>

With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains

Are register'd<sup>73</sup> where every day I turn

The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.—

[*Aside to Banquo.*] Think upon what hath chanc'd, and at more time,

The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak  
Our free hearts each to other.

*Ban.* Very gladly.

*Macb.* Till then, enough.— Come, friends.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. *Forres. The Palace.*

*Flourish.* Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, and ATTENDANTS.

*Dun.* Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not

---

69. Every difficulty finally solves itself.

70. We wait till you are ready.

71. Grant me your indulgence.

72. Occupied with.

73. Recorded in the tablets of my memory.

SCENE IV

**Macbeth**

Those in commission yet return'd?

*Mal.* My liege,  
They are yet not come back. But I have  
spoke

With one that saw him die, who did report  
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,  
Implor'd your highness' pardon, and set forth  
A deep repentance: nothing in his life  
Became him like the leaving it; he died  
As one that had been studied<sup>74</sup> in his death  
To throw away the dearest thing he ow'd  
As 'twere a careless trifle.

*Dun.* There's no art  
To find the mind's construction in the face :  
He was a gentleman on whom I built  
An absolute trust.—

*Enter* MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, *and* ANGUS.

O worthiest cousin!  
The sin of my ingratitude even now  
Was heavy on me; thou art so far before  
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow  
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less de-  
serv'd,  
That the proportion<sup>75</sup> both of thanks and  
payment

74. Instructed.

75. The due proportion.

Might have been mine ! only I have left to  
say,

More is thy due than more than all can pay.

*Macb.* The service and the loyalty I owe,  
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part  
Is to receive our duties: and our duties  
Are to your throne and state, children and  
servants;

Which do but what they should, by doing  
everything

Safe toward<sup>76</sup> your love and honour.

*Dun.*

Welcome hither:

I have begun to plant thee, and will labour  
To make thee full of growing. — Noble Ban-  
quo,

That hast no less deserved, nor must be  
known

No less to have done so, let me infold thee  
And hold thee to my heart.

*Ban.*

There if I grow,

The harvest is your own.

*Dun.*

My plenteous joys,

Wanton in fullness, seek to hide themselves  
In drops of sorrow. — Sons, kinsmen, thanes,  
And you whose places are the nearest, know  
We will establish our estate<sup>77</sup> upon

76. With certain direction.

77. "The crown of Scotland was originally not hereditary. When a

Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter  
 The Prince of Cumberland;<sup>78</sup> which honour must  
 Not unaccompanied invest him only,  
 But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine  
 On all deservers. — From hence to Inverness,  
 And bind us further to you.

*Macb.* The rest is labour,<sup>79</sup> which is not us'd  
 for you.

I'll be myself the harbinger<sup>80</sup> and make joyful  
 The hearing of my wife with your approach;  
 So humbly take my leave.

*Dun.* My worthy Cawdor !

*Macb.* [*Aside.*] The Prince of Cumberland !  
 that is a step

On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,  
 For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires !  
 Let not light see my black and deep desires:  
 The eye wink at the hand,<sup>81</sup> yet let that be  
 Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

[*Exit.*]

*Dun.* True,<sup>82</sup> worthy Banquo: he is full so  
 valiant,<sup>83</sup>

successor was appointed in the lifetime of a king, the title of *Prince of Cumberland* was immediately bestowed upon him." — *Steevens*.

78. Included the counties of Cumberland, Westmoreland, and North-  
 ern Strathclyde.

79. That rest is labor which, &c.

80. Herald.

81. Let the eye not see what the hand does.

82. Duncan and Banquo have been talking while Macbeth spoke.

83. He is just as brave as you say.

And in his commendations I am fed;  
It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,  
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:  
It is a peerless kinsman.<sup>84</sup> [*Flourish. Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. *Inverness. A Room in Macbeth's Castle.*

*Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter.*

*Lady M.* "They met me in the day of success: and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed<sup>85</sup> me 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightest not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell."

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be

---

<sup>84.</sup> Duncan and Macbeth were first cousins.

<sup>85.</sup> Greeted.

## SCENE V

## Macbeth

What thou art promis'd. Yet do I fear thy  
nature;

It is too full o' the milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way. Thou would'st be  
great;

Art not without ambition, but without  
The illness<sup>86</sup> should attend it: what thou  
wouldst highly,

That wouldst thou holily;<sup>87</sup> wouldst not play  
false,

And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'ldst have,  
great Glamis,

That which cries, 'Thus thou must do, if thou  
have it;'

And that which rather thou dost fear to do  
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee  
hither,

That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,  
And chastise with the valour of my tongue  
All that impedes thee from the golden round<sup>88</sup>  
Which fate and metaphysical<sup>89</sup> aid doth seem  
To have thee crown'd withal.<sup>90</sup>

*Enter a Messenger.*

What is your tidings?

---

86. Evil nature.

87. You would realize your ambitions by honest means.

88. Diadem or crown.

89. Supernatural.

90. Doth wish or seek that you should be crowned.

*Mess.* The king comes here to-night.

*Lady M.* Thou'rt mad to say it:  
Is not thy master with him? who, were't so,  
Would have inform'd for preparation.<sup>91</sup>

*Mess.* So please you, it is true: our thane is  
coming.  
One of my fellows had the speed of him,<sup>92</sup>  
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely  
more

Than would make up his message.

*Lady M.* Give him tending;  
He brings great news. [*Exit Messenger.*

The raven himself is hoarse  
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
Under my battlements.<sup>93</sup> — Come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-  
full

Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;  
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,<sup>94</sup>  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace be-  
tween

---

91. Informed us so that we could have made preparation.

92. Outstripped.

93. "Lady Macbeth considers the fate of Duncan so certain that the ominous raven is hoarse with proclaiming it." — *Collier*.

94. Relenting.

## SCENE V

## Macbeth

The effect and it!<sup>95</sup> Come to my woman's  
breasts,  
And take my milk for gall,<sup>96</sup> you murdering  
ministers,  
Wherever in your sightless substances<sup>97</sup>  
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick  
night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
That my keen knife see not<sup>98</sup> the wound it  
makes,  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the  
dark,  
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

*Enter* MACBETH.

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!  
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!  
Thy letters have transported me beyond  
This ignorant<sup>100</sup> present, and I feel now  
The future in the instant.<sup>101</sup>

*Macb.* My dearest love,

Duncan comes here to-night.

*Lady M.* And when goes hence?

---

95. Allow no peace between my resolve and its execution.

96. "Take away my milk and put gall in its place."—*Hudson*.

97. Invisible forms.

98. That there be no reflection in.

99. That according to the all-hail shall hereafter be greater.

100. Inglorious.

101. Present time.



*Macb.* To-morrow, as he purposes.

*Lady M.* O, never

Shall sun that morrow see !

Your face, my thane, is as a book where  
men

May read strange matters. To beguile the  
time,

Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,  
Your hand, your tongue: look like the inno-  
cent flower,

But be the serpent under't. He that's  
coming

Must be provided for: and you shall put  
This night's great business into my dis-  
patch;<sup>102</sup>

Which shall to all our nights and days to  
come

Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

*Macb.* We will speak further.

*Lady M.* Only look up clear;

To alter favor ever is to fear:<sup>103</sup>

Leave all the rest to me.

[*Exeunt.*

---

102. Into my care.

103. To change countenance is to show fear.

SCENE VI. *Before Macbeth's Castle.*

*Hautboys and torches. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, and Attendants.*

*Dun.* This castle hath a pleasant seat;<sup>104</sup>  
the air

Nimble and sweetly recommends itself  
Unto our gentle senses.

*Ban.* This guest of summer,  
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve  
By his lov'd mansionry<sup>105</sup> that the heaven's  
breath

Smells wooingly here: no jutting,<sup>106</sup> frieze,  
Buttress, nor coign of vantage,<sup>107</sup> but this bird  
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant  
cradle:

Where they most breed and haunt, I have  
observ'd  
The air is delicate.

*Enter LADY MACBETH.*

*Dun.* See, see, our honour'd hostess!  
The love that follows us sometime<sup>108</sup> is our  
trouble,

---

<sup>104.</sup> Location.

<sup>105.</sup> The little martins building their nests prove.

<sup>106.</sup> Projecting part of the building.

<sup>107.</sup> "Convenient corner."—*Johnson*.

<sup>108.</sup> Sometimes.

Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach  
you

How you shall bid God 'ild <sup>109</sup> us for your pains  
And thank us for your trouble

*Lady M.* All our service

In every point twice done and then done  
double

Were poor and single business, to contend <sup>110</sup>  
Against those honours deep and broad where-  
with

Your majesty loads our house: for those of  
old,

And the late dignities heap'd up to them,  
We rest your hermits. <sup>111</sup>

*Dun.* Where's the thane of Cawdor?

We cours'd him at the heels, and had a  
purpose

To be his purveyor; but he rides well,  
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath  
help him

To his home before us. Fair and noble  
hostess,

We are your guest to-night.

*Lady M.* Your servants ever

---

<sup>109.</sup> God yield; that is, God reward us.

<sup>110.</sup> To rival.

<sup>111.</sup> "We, as your *hermits* or *beadsmen* shall always pray for you."—  
*Stevens.*

## SCENE VII

**Macbeth**

Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs,  
 in compt,<sup>112</sup>  
 To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,  
 Still to return your own.

*Dun.* Give me your hand;  
 Conduct me to mine host: we love him highly,  
 And shall continue our graces towards him.  
 By your leave, hostess. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII. *Macbeth's Castle.*

*Hautboys and Torches. Enter a Sewer,<sup>113</sup> and  
 divers Servants with dishes and service, and  
 pass over the stage. Then enter MACBETH.*

*Macb.* If it were done when 't is done,<sup>114</sup>  
 then 't were well  
 It were done quickly: if the assassination  
 Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
 With his surcease success;<sup>115</sup> that but this blow  
 Might be the be-all and the end-all here,  
 But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,  
 We'd jump<sup>116</sup> the life to come. But in these  
 cases

---

<sup>112</sup>. Subject to account.

<sup>113</sup>. An officer whose duty it was to place dishes on the table, to taste them, etc.

<sup>114</sup>. If the matter were finished, that is, ended when the murder is completed, then it were well that it were done quickly.

<sup>115</sup>. If the murder could bind up the consequences and could terminate with its success,

<sup>116</sup>. We'd run the risk of what might come after death.

We still have judgment here; that we but  
teach  
Bloody instructions, which being taught re-  
turn  
To plague the inventor: this even-handed  
justice  
Commends<sup>117</sup> the ingredients of our poison'd  
chalice  
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:  
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,  
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,  
Who should against his murderer shut the  
door,  
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this  
Duncan  
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against  
The deep damnation of his taking-off;  
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,  
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, hors'd  
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,<sup>118</sup>  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,  
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no  
spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only

---

<sup>117</sup>. Offers.

<sup>118</sup>. Invisible winds.

## SCENE VII

## Macbeth

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself  
And falls on the other — <sup>119</sup>

*Enter* LADY MACBETH.

How now ! what news ?

*Lady M.* He has almost supp'd: why have  
you left the chamber ?

*Macb.* Hath he asked for me ?

*Lady M.* Know you not he has ?

*Macb.* We will proceed no further in this  
business:

He hath honour'd me of late; and I have  
bought

Golden opinions from all sorts of people,  
Which would be worn now in their newest  
gloss,

Not cast aside so soon.

*Lady M.* Was the hope drunk  
Wherein you dress'd yourself ? <sup>120</sup> hath it slept  
since ?

And wakes it now, to look so green and pale  
At what it did so freely ? From this time  
Such I account thy love. Art thou afraid  
To be the same in thine own act and valor

119. "Macbeth says he has nothing to goad him on to the deed,— nothing to stimulate his flagging purpose,— but mere ambition which is like one who, instead of leaping into the saddle, leaps too far and falls on the other side."—*Clarendon*.

120. A confused metaphor. Bailey says: "Read *blest'd* for *dress'd*, and all is plain and apposite, Shakespearean."

As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have  
that

Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,  
And live a coward in thine own esteem,  
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'  
Like the poor cat i' the adage?<sup>121</sup>

*Macb.*

Prithee, peace:

I dare do all that may become a man;  
Who dares do more is none.

*Lady M.*

What beast was't then

That made you break this enterprise to me?  
When you durst do it, then you were a man;  
And, to be more than what you were, you  
would

Be so much more the man. Nor time nor  
place

Did then adhere, and yet you would make  
both:

They have made themselves, and that their  
fitness now

Does unmake you. I have given suck, and  
know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks  
me:

I would, while it was smiling in my face,

---

<sup>121.</sup> The French proverb says, The cat loves fish but she doesn't love to wet her paws.

## SCENE VII

## Macbeth

Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless  
gums

And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as  
you

Have done to this.

*Macb.*

If we should fail?

*Lady M.*

We fail!

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,  
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep —  
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard jour-  
ney

Soundly invite him — his two chamberlains  
Will I with wine and wassail<sup>122</sup> so convince<sup>123</sup>  
That memory, the warder of the brain,  
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason  
A limbeck<sup>124</sup> only: when in swinish sleep  
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,  
What cannot you and I perform upon  
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon  
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt  
Of our great quell?<sup>125</sup>

*Macb.*

Bring forth men-children

only;

---

122. Carousing.

123. Subdue.

124. In an old distillery the fumes were gathered at the top of the apparatus in a cap or alembic.

125. Murder.



For thy undaunted mettle should compose  
Nothing but males. Will it not be receiv'd,  
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy  
two

Of his own chamber and us'd their very dag-  
gers,

That they have done 't ?

*Lady M.*

Who dares receive it

other,

As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar  
Upon his death ?

*Macb.*

I am settled, and bend up

Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.

Away, and mock the time with fairest show :

False face must hide what the false heart doth  
know.

[*Exeunt.*

## Act II

### SCENE I. *Inverness. Court of Macbeth's Castle.*

*Enter BANQUO, preceded by FLEANCE with a torch.*

*Ban.* How goes the night, boy ?

*Fle.* The moon is down, I have not heard the clock.

*Ban.* And she goes down at twelve.

*Fle.* I take 't, 'tis later, sir.

*Ban.* Hold, take my sword.—There's husbandry<sup>1</sup> in heaven,  
Their candles are all out.—Take thee that too.<sup>2</sup>—

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,  
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,  
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature  
Gives way to in repose !—

*Enter MACBETH and a Servant with a torch.*

Give me my sword.—

Who's there ?

---

1. Economy.

2. Probably a dagger or sword.

*Macb.* A friend.

*Ban.* What, sir, not yet at rest? The  
king's a-bed:

He hath been in unusual pleasure, and  
Sent forth great largess to your offices.<sup>3</sup>  
This diamond he greets your wife withal,  
By the name of most kind hostess; and shut  
up<sup>4</sup>

In measureless content.

*Macb.* Being unprepar'd,  
Our will became the servant to defect,<sup>5</sup>  
Which else should free have wrought.

*Ban.* All's well.  
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:  
To you they have show'd some truth.

*Macb.* I think not of them:  
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,<sup>6</sup>  
We would spend it in some words upon that  
business,  
If you would grant the time.

*Ban.* At your kind'st leisure.

*Macb.* If you shall cleave<sup>7</sup> to my consent,  
when 'tis,

---

3. Has sent great gifts into the servants' rooms.

4. And he is now resting in measureless content.

5. We could not entertain as we wished.

6. When I can have an hour of your time.

7. A word of doubtful meaning. If you will agree with or assist me  
when I have made my plans.

It shall make honour for you.

*Ban.* So I lose none  
In seeking to augment it, but still keep  
My bosom franchis'd and allegiance clear,  
I shall be counsell'd.

*Macb.* Good repose the while !

*Ban.* Thanks, sir : the like to you !

*[Exeunt Banquo and Fleance.]*

*Macb.* Go bid thy mistress, when my drink  
is ready,<sup>8</sup>

She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.—

*[Exit Servant.]*

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand?— Come, let me  
clutch thee.

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight ? or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain ?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.

Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;  
And such an instrument I was to use.—

Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other  
senses,

---

<sup>8</sup>. "The night-cup or posset was an habitual indulgence of the time."  
—*Elwin*.

Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;  
And on thy blade and dudgeon<sup>9</sup> gouts<sup>10</sup> of  
blood,  
Which was not so before.—There's no such  
thing:  
It is the bloody business which informs  
Thus to mine eyes.—Now o'er the one half  
world  
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams  
abuse  
The curtain'd sleep;—witchcraft celebrates  
Pale Hecate's<sup>11</sup> offerings, and wither'd murder,  
Alarum'd by his sentinel the wolf,  
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his  
stealthy pace,  
With Tarquin's<sup>12</sup> ravishing strides, towards his  
design  
Moves like a ghost.<sup>13</sup>—Thou sure and firm-set  
earth,

---

9. Handle or haft.

10. Spots.

11. A three-fold goddess with three heads; supposed to send nocturnal demons and phantoms from the lower world and to teach sorcery and witchcraft; dwelling at cross-roads, tombs, and near the blood of murdered persons; wandering with the souls of the dead, and evoking at her approach the whinings and howlings of dogs. Her offerings were dogs, honey and black ewe lambs.—Condensed from Sprague.

12. Tarquin, Sextus Tarquinius, son of Tarquinius Superbus, sixth king of Rome. He was guilty of the rape of Lucretia, which brought on a revolution.

13. This word is not the same in all editions. The passage probably means that withered Murder, striding cautiously through the darkness as Tarquin did on his infamous errand, moves like a ghost.

## SCENE II

## Macbeth

Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for  
fear

Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,  
And take the present horror from the time,  
Which now suits with it.<sup>14</sup> — Whiles I threat  
he lives :

Words to the heat of deeds too cool breath  
gives.<sup>15</sup>

[*A bell rings.*

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me. —

Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell

That summons thee to heaven — or to hell.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. *The same.*

*Enter* LADY MACBETH.

*Lady M.* That which hath made them drunk  
hath made me bold;<sup>16</sup>

What hath quench'd them hath given me fire;  
— Hark ! Peace !

It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bell-  
man,<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14.</sup> *It refers to whereabouts.*

<sup>15.</sup> "In this construction there was nothing that would offend the ear of Shakespeare's contemporaries."—*Clarendon.*

<sup>16.</sup> "Our sex is obliged to Shakespeare for this passage. He seems to think that a woman could not be rendered completely wicked without some degree of intoxication."—*Mrs. Griffiths.*

<sup>17.</sup> Duncan is the condemned person. In Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* occur these lines:

"I am the common bellman,  
That usually is sent to condemned persons  
The night before they suffer."

Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is  
about it;<sup>18</sup>

The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms  
Do mock their charge with snores; I have  
drugg'd their possets,  
That death and nature do contend about them,  
Whether they live or die.

*Macb.* [*Within.*] Who's there? what, ho!

*Lady M.* Alack, I am afraid they have  
awak'd,  
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the  
deed  
Confounds us.<sup>19</sup> Hark! I laid their daggers  
ready;  
He<sup>20</sup> could not miss 'em. Had he<sup>21</sup> not re-  
sembled  
My father as he slept, I had done't.— My  
husband!

*Enter MACBETH.*

*Macb.* I have done the deed. Didst thou  
not hear a noise?

*Lady M.* I heard the owl scream and the  
crickets cry.

---

18. Macbeth is executing the murder.

19. To attempt and fail will ruin us.

20. Macbeth.

21. Duncan.

## SCENE II

## Macbeth

*Macb.* Did not you speak?

*Lady M.* When? Now?

*Macb.* As I descended.

*Lady M.* Ay.<sup>22</sup>

*Macb.* — Hark!

Who lies i' the second chamber?

*Lady M.* Donalbain.

*Macb.* This is a sorry sight. [*Looking at his hands.*]

*Lady M.* A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

*Macb.* There's one did laugh in's sleep,<sup>23</sup>  
and one cried "Murder!"

That they did wake each other; I stood and  
heard them:

But they did say their prayers, and address'd  
them

Again to sleep.

*Lady M.* There are two lodged together.

*Macb.* One cried, "God bless us!" and  
"Amen" the other;

---

22. This is Hunter's arrangement of the text and it seems the better one. Other editions read: —

*Lady M.* I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry. Did you  
not speak?

*Macb.* When?

*Lady M.* Now.

*Macb.* As I descended?

*Lady M.* Ay.

23. In the second chamber.



As they had seen me with these hangman's  
hands,

Listening their fear. I could not say "Amen,"  
When they did say "God bless us !"

*Lady M.* Consider it not so deeply.

*Macb.* But wherefore could not I pro-  
nounce "Amen" ?

I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"  
Stuck in my throat.

*Lady M.* These deeds must not be thought  
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

*Macb.* Methought I heard a voice cry  
"Sleep no more !

Macbeth does murder sleep" — the innocent  
sleep,  
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave<sup>m</sup> of  
care,

The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second  
course,

Chief nourisher in life's feast, —

*Lady M.* What do you mean ?

*Macb.* Still it cried "Sleep no more !" to  
all the house :

"Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore  
Cawdor

---

<sup>m</sup> 24. Tangled mass of floss silk.

SCENE II

**Macbeth**

Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more."

*Lady M.* Who was it that thus cried?

Why, worthy thane,

You do unbend your noble strength, to think  
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,  
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.  
Why did you bring these daggers from the  
place?

They must lie there: go carry them, and smear  
The sleepy grooms with blood.

*Macb.*

I'll go no more:

I am afraid to think what I have done;

Look on't again I dare not.

*Lady M.*

Infirm of purpose!

Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the  
dead

Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood  
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,  
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;  
For it must seem their guilt.

[*Exit. Knocking within.*]

*Macb.*

Whence is that knocking?

How is't with me, when every noise appals  
me?

What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out  
mine eyes.

Will all great Neptune's<sup>25</sup> ocean wash this  
blood  
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will  
rather  
The multitudinous<sup>26</sup> seas incarnadine,  
Making the green one red.

*Re-enter* LADY MACBETH.

*Lady M.* My hands are of your color; but I  
shame  
To wear a heart so white. [*Knocking within.*  
I hear a knocking  
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber.  
A little water clears us of this deed:  
How easy is it then! Your constancy  
Hath left you unattended.<sup>27</sup> [*Knocking within.*  
Hark! more knocking.  
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us  
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost  
So poorly in your thoughts.  
*Macb.* To know my deed, 'twere best not  
know myself. [*Knocking within.*  
Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would  
thou couldst! [*Exeunt.*

---

<sup>25</sup> Neptune, brother of Jove, was "governor of all the waters upon the face of the earth and sole monarch of the ocean."—*Guerber*.

<sup>26</sup> Great mass of waters.

<sup>27</sup> "Your courage has deserted you."—*Singer*.

SCENE III. *The Same.*

*Enter a Porter. Knocking within.*

*Porter.* Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old<sup>28</sup> turning the key. [*Knocking within.* Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on th' expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins<sup>29</sup> enow<sup>30</sup> about you; here you'll sweat for 't. [*Knocking within.* Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's<sup>31</sup> name? Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven: O come in, equivocator. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose.<sup>32</sup> Come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose. [*Knock-*

28. "Frequent. More than enough." — *Steevens*.

29. Handkerchiefs.

30. Enough. Perhaps the farmer hanged himself with a handkerchief and still had it about his neck. So *Delius* thinks.

31. Beelzebub is one; Satan or Lucifer, the other, probably.

32. Warburton says: "The joke consists in this, that a French hose being very short and strait, a tailor must be a master of his trade who could steal anything from thence." Other commentators explain the joke differently.

*ing within.*] Knock, knock; never at quiet!  
What are you? But this place is too cold for  
hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had  
thought to have let in some of all professions,  
that go the primrose way to the everlasting  
bonfire.— [*Knocking within.*] Anon, anon! I  
pray you, remember the porter.<sup>33</sup>

*[Opens the gate.*

*Enter MACDUFF and LENNOX.*

*Macd.* Was it so late, friend, ere you went  
to bed,  
That you did lie so late?

*Port.* Faith, sir, we were carousing till  
the second cock.<sup>34</sup>

*Macd.* Is thy master stirring?

*Enter MACBETH.*

Our knocking has awak'd him; here he comes.

*Len.* Good morrow, noble sir.

*Macb.* Good morrow, both.

*Macd.* Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

*Macb.* Not yet.

*Macd.* He did command me to call timely  
on him:

---

33. Coming, coming, I pray you give something to the porter. Some commentators think Shakespeare did not write this soliloquy.

34. "About three o'clock in the morning." — *Malone.*

## SCENE III

## Macbeth

I have almost slipp'd the hour.

*Macb.* I'll bring you to him.

*Macd.* I know this is a joyful trouble to you;  
But yet 'tis one.

*Macb.* The labour we delight in physics<sup>35</sup>  
pain.

This is the door.

*Macd.* I'll make so bold to call,  
For 'tis but limited<sup>36</sup> service. [*Exit.*

*Len.* Goes the king hence to-day?

*Macb.* He does: he did appoint so.

*Len.* The night has been unruly; where we  
lay,  
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they  
say,  
Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams  
of death,  
And prophesying with accents terrible  
Of dire combustion and confus'd events  
New hatch'd to the woeful time; the obscure<sup>37</sup>  
bird  
Clamour'd the livelong night; some say the  
earth

Was feverous and did shake.

*Macb.* 'Twas a rough night.

---

35. Is a remedy for.

36. "Appointed."—*Warburton*.

37. The bird that loves the dark.

*Len.* My young remembrance cannot parallel  
A fellow to it.

*Re-enter MACDUFF.*

*Macd.* O horror, horror, horror! Tongue  
nor heart  
Cannot conceive nor name thee!

*Macb.* }  
*Len.* } What's the matter?

*Macd.* Confusion now hath made his masterpiece,  
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope  
The Lord's anointed<sup>38</sup> temple, and stole  
thence  
The life o' the building.

*Macb.* What is't you say? the life?

*Len.* Mean you his majesty?

*Macd.* Approach the chamber, and destroy  
your sight  
With a new Gorgon.<sup>39</sup> Do not bid me speak;  
See, and then speak yourselves.

*[Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox.]*

Awake, awake!

Ring the alarm-bell.— Murder and  
treason!—

Banquo and Donalbain! — Malcolm! awake!

38. Duncan was the "Lord's anointed" servant. Mixed metaphor.

39. The Gorgons were three sisters of whom Medusa was the best known. Her hair was of writhing serpents and her glance had the power to turn to stone whoever looked at her.

## SCENE III

## Macbeth

Shake off this downy sleep, death's counter-  
feit,

And look on death itself ! up, up, and see  
The great doom's image!<sup>40</sup>—Malcolm! Banquo!  
As from your graves rise up, and walk like  
sprites,

To countenance this horror. Ring the bell.  
[*Bell rings.*]

*Enter* LADY MACBETH.

*Lady M.* What's the business,  
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley  
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!

*Macd.* O gentle lady,  
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:  
The repetition, in a woman's ear,  
Would murder as it fell.—

*Enter* BANQUO.

O Banquo, Banquo!  
Our royal master's murdered.

*Lady M.* Woe, alas!  
What, in our house?

*Ban.* Too cruel anywhere.  
Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,  
And say it is not so.

---

<sup>40</sup>. A sight as terrible as an image of the Last Judgment.



*Re-enter MACBETH and LENNOX.*

*Macb.* Had I but died an hour before this  
    chance,  
I had lived a blessed time; for from this instant  
There's nothing serious in mortality:  
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;  
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees  
Is left this vault to brag of.

*Enter MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.*

*Don.* What is amiss?

*Macb.* You are, and do not know't:  
The spring, the head, the fountain of your  
    blood

Is stopp'd,—the very source of it is stopp'd.

*Macd.* Your royal father's murder'd.

*Mal.* O, by whom?

*Len.* Those of his chamber, as it seem'd,  
    had done't.

Their hands and faces were all badg'd with  
    blood;

So were their daggers, which unwip'd we  
    found

Upon their pillows: they star'd and were  
    distracted;

No man's life was to be trusted with them.

*Macb.* O, yet I do repent me of my fury,  
That I did kill them.

*Macd.* Wherefore did you so?

*Macb.* Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate  
and furious,  
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man :  
The expedition of my violent love  
Outrun the pauser reason. Here lay Duncan,  
His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood,  
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in  
nature  
For ruin's wasteful entrance; there, the mur-  
derers,  
Steep'd in the colors of their trade, their  
daggers  
Unmannerly breech'd with gore:<sup>41</sup> who could  
refrain,  
That had a heart to love, and in that heart  
Courage to make's love known?

*Lady M.* Help me hence, ho !

*Macd.* Look to the lady.

*Mal.* [*Aside to Don.*] Why do we hold our  
tongues,

---

<sup>41</sup>. This passage has been the occasion of much and differing comment. "The daggers were covered with blood as though with breeches. Breeches which are worn for decency's sake for *manners* are in this case *unmannerly*." — *Delius*. "There are undoubtedly two faults here which I have endeavored to take away by reading: '*Unmanly drenched* with gore.'" — *Johnson*.

That most may claim this argument<sup>42</sup> for ours?

*Don.* [*Aside to Mal.*] What should be  
spoken here, where our fate,  
Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us?  
Let's away —

Our tears are not yet brew'd.

*Mal.* [*Aside to Don.*] Nor our strong sorrow  
Upon the foot of motion.<sup>43</sup>

*Ban.* Look to the lady : —

[*Lady Macbeth is carried out.*]

And when we have our naked frailties hid,  
That suffer in exposure,<sup>44</sup> let us meet,  
And question this most bloody piece of work,  
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake  
us :

In the great hand of God I stand, and thence  
Against the undivulg'd pretense I fight  
Of treasonous malice.<sup>45</sup>

*Macd.* And so do I.

*All.* So all.

*Macb.* Let's briefly put on manly readiness,  
And meet i' the hall together.

*All.* Well contented.

[*Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.*]

---

42. Subject.

43. Our sorrow is not yet in motion, is not yet fully felt.

44. "When we have clothed our halfdrest bodies, which may take cold from being exposed to the air,"—*Steevens*.

45. I will fight against any new treachery or treason.

*Mal.* What will you do? Let's not consort  
with them :

To show an unfelt sorrow is an office  
Which the false man does easy. I'll to Eng-  
land.

*Don.* To Ireland, I : our separated fortune  
Shall keep us both the safer; where we are,  
There's daggers in men's smiles : the near in  
blood,  
The nearer bloody.<sup>46</sup>

*Mal.* This murderous shaft that's shot  
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way  
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse;  
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,  
But shift away : there's warrant<sup>47</sup> in that theft  
Which steals itself when there's no mercy left.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. *Without the Castle.*

*Enter Ross with an old Man.*

*Old M.* Threescore and ten I can remember  
well :

Within the volume of which time I have seen  
Hours dreadful and things strange; but this  
sore night

---

<sup>46</sup>. "Donalbain suspects all, but most his father's cousin, Macbeth."  
—*Clarendon.*

<sup>47</sup>. Justification.

Hath trifled<sup>48</sup> former knowings.

*Ross.* Ah, good father,  
Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with  
man's act,  
Threaten his bloody stage : by the clock 'tis  
day,  
And yet dark night strangles the traveling  
lamp.<sup>49</sup>

Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,  
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,  
When living light should kiss it ?

*Old M.* 'Tis unnatural,  
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday  
last,  
A falcon, towering in her pride of place,  
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

*Ross.* And Duncan's horses — a thing most  
strange and certain —  
Beauteous and swift, the minions<sup>50</sup> of their  
race,  
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung  
out,  
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would  
make  
War with mankind.

---

48. Made small.

49. The sun.

50. Darlings.

*Old M.* 'Tis said they eat each other.

*Ross.* They did so, to the amazement of  
mine eyes  
That look'd upon't. Here comes the good  
Macduff.—

*Enter MACDUFF.*

How goes the world, sir, now?

*Macd.* Why, see you not?

*Ross.* Is't known who did this more than  
bloody deed?

*Macd.* Those that Macbeth hath slain.

*Ross.* Alas, the day!  
What good could they pretend?

*Macd.* They were suborn'd:  
Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,  
Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon  
them  
Suspitions of the deed.

*Ross.* 'Gainst nature still:  
Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up<sup>51</sup>  
Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like  
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

*Macd.* He is already nam'd, and gone to  
Scone<sup>52</sup>

---

51. Devour.

52. The ancient royal city about two miles north of Perth. A long line of Scotch kings was crowned on the celebrated stone which has since been removed to Westminster Abbey, and is now the seat upon which the coronation of the British monarchs takes place.

To be invested.<sup>53</sup>

*Ross.* Where is Duncan's body?

*Macd.* Carried to Colme-kill,<sup>54</sup>

The sacred storehouse of his predecessors  
And guardian of their bones.

*Ross.* Will you to Scone?

*Macd.* No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

*Ross.* Well, I will thither.

*Macd.* Well, may you see things well done  
there: adieu!

Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

*Ross.* Farewell, father.

*Old M.* God's benison go with you, and with  
those

That would make good of bad, and friends of  
foes! [Exeunt.

---

53. Crowned.

54. The famous Iona, one of the Western Islands, where most of the ancient kings of Scotland were buried.

## Act III

SCENE I. *Forres. A Room in the Palace.*

*Enter BANQUO.*

*Ban.* Thou hast it now, king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,  
As the weird women promis'd, and I fear  
Thou play'dst most foully for't. Yet it was  
said  
It should not stand in thy posterity,  
But that myself should be the root and father  
Of many kings. If there come truth from  
them —

As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine —  
Why, by the verities on thee made good,  
May they not be my oracles as well  
And set me up in hope? But hush! no more.

*Sennet<sup>1</sup> sounded. Enter MACBETH, as king;  
LADY MACBETH, as queen; LENNOX, ROSS,  
Lords, Ladies, and Attendants.*

*Macb.* Here 's our chief guest.

*Lady M.* If he had been forgotten,  
It had been as a gap in our great feast,

---

x. "A word chiefly occurring in the stage direction of old plays, and seeming to indicate a particular set of notes on a trumpet, different from a flourish."—*Nares.*



And all-thing unbecoming.

*Macb.* To-night we hold a solemn supper, sir,  
And I'll request your presence.

*Ban.* Let your highness  
Command upon me, to the which my duties  
Are with a most indissoluble tie  
For ever knit.

*Macb.* Ride you this afternoon ?

*Ban.* Ay, my good lord.

*Macb.* We should have else desir'd your good  
advice,  
Which still hath been both grave and prosper-  
ous,  
In this day's council; but we'll take to-morrow,  
Is't far you ride ?

*Ban.* As far, my lord, as will fill up the time  
'Twixt this and supper: go not my horse the  
better,  
I must become a borrower of the night  
For a dark hour or twain.

*Macb.* Fail not our feast.

*Ban.* My lord, I will not.

*Macb.* We hear our bloody cousins are  
bestow'd  
In England and in Ireland, not confessing  
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers  
With strange invention: but of that to-mor-  
row,

SCENE I

**Macbeth**

When therewithal we shall have cause of  
state

Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse: adieu,  
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with  
you?

*Ban.* Ay, my good lord: our time does  
call upon 's.

*Macb.* I wish your horses swift and sure of  
foot;

And so I do commend you to their backs.

Farewell.— [*Exit Banquo.*]

Let every man be master of his time  
Till seven at night. To make society  
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself  
Till supper-time alone: while then, God be  
with you!

[*Exeunt all but Macbeth and an Attendant.*]

Sirrah,<sup>2</sup> a word with you: attend those men.  
Our pleasure?

*Attend.* They are, my lord, without the pal-  
ace gate.

*Macb.* Bring them before us. —

[*Exit Attendant.*]

To be thus is nothing;  
But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo

---

2. A term used in addressing inferiors, or used in contempt, or as a term of reproach.

Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature  
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much  
he dares,

And to that dauntless temper of his mind,  
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor  
To act in safety. There is none but he  
Whose being I do fear: and under him  
My Genius<sup>3</sup> is rebuk'd, as it is said  
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar. He chid the  
sisters,

When first they put the name of king upon  
me,

And bade them speak to him; then prophet-  
like

They hailed him father to a line of kings.  
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,  
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,  
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,  
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,  
For Banquo's issue have I fil'd<sup>4</sup> my mind;  
For them the gracious Duncan have I mur-  
der'd;

Put rancors in the vessel of my peace  
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel<sup>5</sup>  
Given to the common enemy of man,

3. "The conceit of a predominant or mastering spirit of one man over another is ancient, and received still in vulgar opinion." — *Bacon*.

4. Defiled.

5. Salvation.

SCENE I

**Macbeth**

To make them kings, the seeds of Banquo  
kings !

Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,  
And champion me to the utterance !<sup>6</sup>— Who's  
there ?—

*Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers.*

Now go to the door, and stay there till we  
call.—

*[Exit Attendant.]*

Was it not yesterday we spoke together ?

*First Mur.* It was, so please your highness.

*Mach.* Well then, now

Have you consider'd of my speeches ? Know  
That it was he in the times past which held  
you

So under fortune, which you thought had been  
Our innocent self. This I made good to you  
In our last conference, pass'd in probation<sup>7</sup> with  
you,

How you were borne in hand,<sup>8</sup> how cross'd,  
the instruments,

Who wrought with them, and all things else  
that might

To half a soul and to a notion craz'd

---

6. Uttermost. A fight to the death.

7. Passed in review — fully proved.

8. Deluded by encouraging hope.

Say "Thus did Banquo."

*First Mur.* You made it known to us.

*Macb.* I did so, and went further, which is  
now

Our point of second meeting. Do you find  
Your patience so predominant in your nature  
That you can let this go? Are you so gossell'd  
To pray<sup>9</sup> for this good man and for his issue,  
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the  
grave

And beggar'd yours for ever?

*First Mur.* We are men, my liege.

*Macb.* Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,  
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels,  
curs,  
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves, are  
clept<sup>10</sup>

All by the name of dogs: the valued file<sup>11</sup>  
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,  
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one  
According to the gift which bounteous nature  
Hath in him clos'd; whereby he does receive  
Particular addition, from the bill  
That writes them all alike: and so of men.  
Now if you have a station in the file,<sup>12</sup>

9. So trained in virtue as to pray.

10. Called.

11. The valued list where each dog's degree and peculiarities are all set down.

12. In the list where men are described.

Not 't the worst rank of manhood, say it,  
And I will put that business in your bosoms,  
Whose execution takes your enemy off,  
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,  
Who wear our health but sickly in his life <sup>13</sup>  
Which in his death were perfect.

*Second Mur.* I am one, my liege,  
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world  
Have so incens'd that I am reckless what  
I do to spite the world.

*First Mur.* And I another  
So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,  
That I would set my life on any chance,  
To mend it or be rid on't.

*Macb.* Both of you  
Know Banquo was your enemy.

*Both Mur.* True, my lord.

*Macb.* So is he mine, in such bloody distance <sup>14</sup>

That every minute of his being thrusts  
Against my near'st of life : <sup>15</sup> and though I could  
With barefac'd power sweep him from my sight  
And bid my will avouch <sup>16</sup> it, yet I must not,

---

<sup>13</sup>. While he lives.

<sup>14</sup>. The distance for deadly combat with swords.

<sup>15</sup>. Most vital parts.

<sup>16</sup>. Justify.

For certain friends that are both his and  
mine,  
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall  
Who<sup>17</sup> I myself struck down: and thence it is,  
That I to your assistance do make love,  
Masking the business from the common eye  
For sundry weighty reasons.

*Second Mur.* We shall, my lord,  
Perform what you command us.

*First Mur.* Though our lives—

*Macb.* Your spirits shine through you.  
Within this hour at most  
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,  
Acquaint you with the perfect spy<sup>18</sup> o' the  
time,  
The moment on't; for't must be done to-  
night,  
And something from the palace; always thought  
That I require a clearness:<sup>19</sup> and with him—  
To leave no rubs<sup>20</sup> nor botches in the work—  
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,  
Whose absence is no less material to me  
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate

17. Whom.

18. An exact intimation of the time. The meaning of this phrase is disputed.

19. Always remember that I require you to keep me clear from suspicion.

20. In the game of bowls *rubs* were anything that interfered with the progress of the ball.

SCENE II

Macbeth

Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart:  
I'll come to you anon.

*Both Mur.* We are resolv'd, my lord.

*Macb.* I'll call upon you straight: abide  
within.

[*Exeunt Murderers.*

It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight,  
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. *The Same. Another Room.*

*Enter* LADY MACBETH *and a Servant.*

*Lady M.* Is Banquo gone from court?

*Serv.* Ay, madam, but returns again to-  
night.

*Lady M.* Say to the king, I would attend  
his leisure

For a few words.

*Serv.* Madam, I will. [*Exit.*

*Lady M.* Naught's had, all's spent,  
Where our desire is got without content:  
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy  
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

*Enter* MACBETH.

How now, my lord ! why do you keep alone,  
Of sorriest fancies your companions making,



Using those thoughts which should indeed  
have died

With them they think on? Things without  
all remedy

Should be without regard: what's done is done.

*Macb.* We have scotch'd<sup>21</sup> the snake, not  
kill'd it:

She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor  
malice

Remains in danger of her former tooth.

But let the frame of things disjoint, both the  
worlds<sup>22</sup> suffer,

Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep

In the affliction of these terrible dreams

That shake us nightly; better be with the  
dead,

Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to  
peace,

Than on the torture of the mind to lie

In restless ecstasy.<sup>23</sup> Duncan is in his grave;

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;

Treason has done his worst; nor steel, nor  
poison,

Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,

Can touch him further.

---

21. Hacked or maimed.

22. Heaven and earth.

23. A state of mental alienation.

*Lady M.* Come on;  
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;  
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-  
night.

*Macb.* So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be  
you:  
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;  
Present him eminence,<sup>24</sup> both with eye and  
tongue:

Unsafe the while, that we  
Must lave our honours in these flattering  
streams,  
And make our faces visards<sup>25</sup> to our hearts,  
Disguising what they are.

*Lady M.* You must leave this.

*Macb.* O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear  
wife!  
Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance,  
lives.

*Lady M.* But in them nature's copy's not  
eterne.<sup>26</sup>

*Macb.* There's comfort yet; they are assail-  
able;  
Then be thou jocund. Ere the bat hath  
flown

---

<sup>24</sup>. Do him the highest honor.

<sup>25</sup>. Masks, disguises.

<sup>26</sup>. The human body is not eternal.

His cloister'd flight, ere to black Hecate's  
summons

The shard-borne<sup>27</sup> beetle with his drowsy hums  
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall  
be done

A deed of dreadful note.

*Lady M.* What's to be done?

*Macb.* Be innocent of the knowledge, dear-  
est chuck,<sup>28</sup>

Till thou applaud the deed.—Come, seeling  
night,

Scarf up the tender eye<sup>29</sup> of pitiful day,  
And with thy bloody and invisible hand  
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond  
Which keeps me pale!<sup>30</sup>—Light thickens, and  
the crow

Makes wing to the rooky wood:<sup>31</sup>

Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,  
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do  
rouse.

Thou marvell'st at my words; but hold thee  
still:

---

27. Carried along by its hard wings.

28. Chicken.

29. Night that closes the eye as a hawk's eye was closed by drawing a fine thread through the lids.

30. Shut in—within the pale.

31. "The very epithet, 'rooky,' appears to us to caw with the sound of many bed-ward rooks bristling and croaking to their several roosts."

—*Clarke*.

Things bad begun make strong themselves by  
ill.

So, prithee, go with me. [Exeunt.

SCENE III. *A Park near the Palace.*

*Enter three Murderers.*

*First Mur.* But who did bid thee join with  
us ?

*Third Mur.* Macbeth.

*Second Mur.* He needs not our mistrust,  
since he delivers

Our offices and what we have to do  
To the direction just.

*First Mur.* Then stand with us.  
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of  
day :

Now spurs the lated<sup>32</sup> traveller apace  
To gain the timely inn, and near approaches  
The subject of our watch.

*Third Mur.* Hark ! I hear horses.

*Ban.* [*Within.*] Give us a light there, ho !

*Second Mur.* Then 'tis he: the rest  
That are within the note of expectation<sup>33</sup>  
Already are i' the court.

*First Mur.* His horses go about.

---

<sup>32</sup>. Belated.

<sup>33</sup>. List of guests.

*Third Mur.* Almost a mile; but he does usually —  
So all men do—from hence to the palace gate  
Make it their walk.

*Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE with a torch.*

*Second Mur.* A light, a light!

*Third Mur.* 'Tis he.

*First Mur.* Stand to't.

*Ban.* It will be rain to-night.

*First Mur.* Let it come down.

*[They set upon Banquo.]*

*Ban.* O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance,  
fly, fly, fly! Thou may'st revenge.— O  
slave! *[Dies. Fleance escapes.]*

*Third Mur.* Who did strike out the light?

*First Mur.* Was't not the way?

*Third Mur.* There's but one down; the  
son is fled.

*Second Mur.* We have lost  
Best half of our affair.

*First Mur.* Well, let's away and say how  
much is done. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE IV

**Macbeth**

SCENE IV. *Hall in the Palace.*

*A Banquet prepared. Enter MACBETH, LADY  
MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, Lords, and  
Attendants.*

*Macb.* You know your own degrees;<sup>34</sup> sit  
down: at first  
And last the hearty welcome.

*Lords.* Thanks to your majesty.

*Macb.* Ourself will mingle with society  
And play the humble host.  
Our hostess keeps her state,<sup>35</sup> but in best time  
We will require her welcome.

*Lady M.* Pronounce it for me, sir, to all  
our friends;  
For my heart speaks they are welcome.

*[Enter first Murderer to the door.]*

*Macb.* See, they encounter thee with their  
hearts' thanks.—

Both sides are even: here I'll sit i' the midst.  
Be large in mirth; anon<sup>36</sup> we'll drink a measure  
The table round.—*[Approaching the door.]*  
There's blood upon thy face.

*Mur.* 'Tis Banquo's then.

---

34. Your rank and where you should sit at the banquet.

35. I will mingle with you but my wife will occupy the chair of state  
at the head of the table.

36. Soon. Macbeth has seen the murderer at the door.

*Macb.* 'Tis better thee without than he within.

Is he dispatch'd?

*Mur.* My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.

*Macb.* Thou art the best o' the cut-throats:  
yet he's good  
That did the like for Fleance: if thou didst it,  
Thou art the nonpareil.

*Mur.* Most royal sir,  
Fleance is scap'd.

*Macb.* [*Aside.*] Then comes my fit again:  
I had else been perfect,  
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,  
As broad and general as the casing air;  
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound  
in  
To saucy doubts and fears. — But Banquo's  
safe?

*Mur.* Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,  
With twenty trenched gashes on his head,  
The least a death to nature.

*Macb.* Thanks for that.  
[*Aside.*] There the grown serpent lies; the  
worm that's fled  
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,

## SCENE IV

## Macbeth

No teeth for the present. — Get thee gone;  
to-morrow

We'll hear ourselves<sup>37</sup> again. [*Exit Murderer.*

*Lady M.*

My royal lord,

You do not give the cheer;<sup>38</sup> the feast is sold  
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,  
'Tis given with welcome:<sup>39</sup> to feed were best  
at home;

From thence<sup>40</sup> the sauce to meat is ceremony;  
Meeting were bare without it.

*Macb.*

Sweet remembrancer!<sup>41</sup>

Now good digestion wait on appetite;  
And health on both!

*Len.*

May't please your highness sit.

[*The Ghost of Banquo enters and sits in Macbeth's place.*]

*Macb.* Here had we now our country's  
honour roof'd,

Were the grac'd person of our Banquo  
present;

Who may I rather challenge for unkindness  
Than pity for mischance!

*Ross.*

His absence, sir,

---

37. Will be myself again.

38. The usual courtesies.

39. The feast that is not given with welcome is sold, not given.

40. Away from home.

41. Speaking to Lady Macbeth.



Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your  
highness

To grace us with your royal company.

*Macb.* The table's full.

*Len.* Here is a place reserv'd, sir.

*Macb.* Where ?

*Len.* Here, my good lord. What is't that  
moves your highness ?

*Macb.* Which of you have done this ?

*Lords.* What, my good lord ?

*Macb.* Thou canst not say I did it: never  
shake

Thy gory locks at me.

*Ross.* Gentlemen, rise: his highness is not  
well.

*Lady M.* Sit, worthy friends, my lord is  
often thus,

And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep  
seat;

The fit is momentary; upon a thought  
He will again be well. If much you note him,  
You shall offend him and extend his passion;  
Feed, and regard him not. — Are you a man ?<sup>42</sup>

*Macb.* Ay, and a bold one, that dare look  
on that

Which might appal the devil.

*Lady M.* O proper stuff !

---

<sup>42</sup>. Spoken to Macbeth.

This is the very painting of your fear:  
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,  
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,  
Impostors to true fear, would well become  
A woman's story at a winter's fire,  
Authoriz'd by her grandam. Shame itself!  
Why do you make such faces? When all's  
done,  
You look but on a stool.

*Macb.* Prithee, see there! behold! look!  
lo! how say you?—

Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak  
too. —

If charnel-houses and our graves must send  
Those that we bury back, our monuments  
Shall be the maws of kites. [*Exit Ghost.*

*Lady M.* What, quite unmann'd in folly?

*Macb.* If I stand here, I saw him.

*Lady M.* Fie, for shame!

*Macb.* Blood hath been shed ere now,  
i' the olden time,

Ere human statute purg'd the gentle weal;<sup>43</sup>

Ay, and since too, murders have been per-  
form'd

Too terrible for the ear: the time has been,  
That when the brains were out the man would  
die,

---

43. Ere humane laws purified the commonwealth and made it gentle.

And there an end; but now they rise again,  
With twenty mortal murders<sup>44</sup> on their crowns  
And push us from our stools. This is more  
strange

Than such a murder is.

*Lady M.* My worthy lord,  
Your noble friends do lack you.

*Macb.* I do forget. —  
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;  
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing  
To those that know me. Come, love and  
health to all;

Then I'll sit down. — Give me some wine, full. —

I drink to the general joy o' the whole table  
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we  
miss;

Would he were here ! to all and him we thine  
And all to all.

*Lords.* Our duties, and the pledge.

*Re-enter Ghost.*

*Macb.* Avaunt ! and quit my sight ! let the  
earth hide thee !

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold  
Thou hast no speculation<sup>45</sup> in those eyes

44. Mortal wounds.

45. Light.—Light of reason.

Which thou dost glare with.

*Lady M.* Think of this, good peers,  
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;  
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

*Macb.* What man dare, I dare:  
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,  
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan <sup>46</sup> tiger;  
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves  
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,  
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;  
If trembling I inhabit <sup>47</sup> then, protest me  
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!  
Unreal mockery, hence! [*Ghost disappears.*

Why, so: being gone,  
I am a man again.—Pray you, sit still.

*Lady M.* You have displac'd the mirth,  
broke the good meeting,  
With most admir'd <sup>48</sup> disorder.

*Macb.* Can such things be,  
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,  
Without our special wonder? You make me  
strange <sup>49</sup>

Even to the disposition that I owe,  
When now I think you can behold such sights,

46. Hyrcania lay south of the Caspian Sea. Pliny mentions that tigers bred there.

47. Remain in my castle. This is a much-disputed passage.

48. Wonderful.

49. A stranger to my own courage.

And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,  
When mine is blanch'd with fear.

*Ross.* What sights, my lord?

*Lady M.* I pray you, speak not; he grows  
worse and worse;

Question enrages him. At once, good night:  
Stand not upon the order of your going,  
But go at once.

*Len.* Good night; and better health  
Attend his majesty.

*Lady M.* A kind good night to all!

[*Excunt all except Macb. and Lady M.*]

*Macb.* It will have blood, they say: blood  
will have blood:

Stones have been known to move and trees to  
speak;

Augurs and understood relations have  
By magot-pies<sup>50</sup> and choughs<sup>51</sup> and rooks  
brought forth

The secret'st man of blood.<sup>52</sup>—What is the  
night?<sup>53</sup>

*Lady M.* Almost at odds with morning,  
which is which.

*Macb.* How say'st thou, that Macduff de-  
nies his person at our great bidding?

---

50. Magpie.

51. Bird of the crow family.

52. Have discovered the best hidden murderer.

53. How far advanced is the night?

## SCENE IV

## Macbeth

*Lady M.* Did you send to him, sir?

*Macb.* I hear it by the way, but I will send:  
There's not one of them but in his house  
I keep my servant fee'd. I will to-morrow,  
And betimes I will, to the weird sisters:  
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to  
know,

By the worst means, the worst. For mine  
own good

All causes shall give way: I am in blood  
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,  
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.  
Strange things I have in head that will to  
hand,

Which must be acted ere they may be  
scann'd.

*Lady M.* You lack the season of all natures,  
sleep.

*Macb.* Come, we'll to sleep. My strange  
and self-abuse<sup>54</sup>

Is the initiate fear that wants hard use:<sup>55</sup>

We are yet but young in deed. [Exeunt.

---

54. Deception.

55. The early fear that needs to be hardened by use.

SCENE V. *A Heath.*

*Thunder. Enter the three Witches, meeting*  
HECATE.

*First Witch.* Why, how now, Hecate ! you  
look angrily.

*Hecate.* Have I not reason, beldams as  
you are,

Saucy and overbold ? How did you dare  
To trade and traffic with Macbeth  
In riddles and affairs of death;  
And I, the mistress of your charms,  
The close contriver of all harms,  
Was never call'd to bear my part,  
Or show the glory of our art ?  
And, which is worse, all you have done  
Hath been but for a wayward son,  
Spiteful and wrathful; who, as others do,  
Loves for his own ends, not for you.  
But make amends now: get you gone,  
And at the pit of Acheron<sup>56</sup>  
Meet me i' the morning: thither he  
Will come to know his destiny.  
Your vessels and your spells provide,  
Your charms and everything beside.  
I am for the air; this night I'll spend  
Unto a dismal and a fatal end :

---

56. The pit believed to be the entrance to the lower world.

## SCENE VI

## Macbeth

Great business must be wrought ere noon.  
Upon the corner of the moon  
There hangs a vaporous drop profound;<sup>57</sup>  
I'll catch it ere it come to ground;  
And that, distill'd by magic sleights,<sup>58</sup>  
Shall raise such artificial sprites  
As by the strength of their illusion  
Shall draw him on to his confusion.  
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear  
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear:  
And you all know security  
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

[*Music and a song within*: "Come away,  
come away," etc.]

Hark! I am called; my little spirit, see,  
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [*Exit*.

*First Witch*. Come, let's make haste;  
she'll soon be back again. [*Exeunt*.

SCENE VI. *Forres. The Palace.*

*Enter LENNOX and another Lord.*

*Len*. My former speeches have but hit  
your thoughts,  
Which can interpret farther: only I say  
Things have been strangely borne. The gra-  
cious Duncan

57. A drop having deep and potent qualities.

58. Artifices.



Was pitied of Macbeth:— marry, he was  
dead;

And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too  
late;

Whom, you may say, if 't please you, Fleance  
kill'd,

For Fleance fled: men must not walk too late.  
Who cannot want the thought, how mon-  
strous

It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain  
To kill their gracious father? damned fact!  
How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not straight  
In pious rage the two delinquents tear,  
That were the slaves of drink and thralls of  
sleep?

Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely  
too;

For 't would have anger'd any heart alive  
To hear the men deny 't. So that, I say,  
He has borne all things well: and I do think  
That had he Duncan's sons under his key —  
As, and 't please heaven, he shall not — they  
should find

What 'twere to kill a father; so should  
Fleance.

But, peace! for from broad words, and 'cause  
he fail'd

His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear

## SCENE VI

## Macbeth

Macduff lives in disgrace. Sir, can you tell  
Where he bestows himself?

*Lord.* The son of Duncan,  
From whom this tyrant holds the due of  
birth,

Lives in the English court, and is receiv'd  
Of the most pious Edward with such grace  
That the malevolence of fortune nothing  
Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff  
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid  
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward;  
That by the help of these, with Him above  
To ratify the work, we may again  
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,  
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody  
knives,

Do faithful homage and receive free honors;  
All which we pine for now. And this report  
Hath so exasperate their king that he  
Prepares for some attempt of war.

*Len.* Sent he to Macduff?

*Lord.* He did: and with an absolute "Sir,  
not I,"

The cloudy messenger turns me his back,  
And hums, as who should say "You'll rue the  
time

That clogs me with this answer."

*Len.* And that well might

Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance

His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel  
Fly to the court of England and unfold  
His message ere he come, that a swift blessing  
May soon return to this our suffering country  
Under a hand accurs'd !

*Lord.* I'll send my prayers with him !

*[Exeunt.]*

## Act IV

SCENE I. *A Cavern. In the Middle, a Boiling Cauldron. Thunder. Enter the three Witches.*

*First Witch.* Thrice the brinded cat<sup>1</sup> hath mew'd.

*Sec. Witch.* Thrice and once the hedge-pig<sup>2</sup> whin'd.

*Third Witch.* Harpier<sup>3</sup> cries,—'tis time, 'tis time.

*First Witch.* Round about the cauldron go;  
In the poison'd entrails throw.  
Toad, that under cold stone  
Days and nights has thirty-one  
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,  
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

*All.* Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble,

*Sec. Witch.* Fillet<sup>4</sup> of a fenny snake,  
In the cauldron boil and bake;

---

1. Brindled cat. The cat has always been the favorite agent of witches.

2. Hedgehog. It was popularly believed to suck the cows and poison their milk, being possessed by an evil spirit.

3. Harpy. The harpies of Roman mythology were monsters, half bird and half woman. Perhaps this means the bat, which was a favorite animal with witches.

4. Hood or cast-off skin.

Eye of newt and toe of frog,  
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,  
Adder's fork and blind-worm's <sup>5</sup> sting,  
Lizard's leg and howlet's <sup>6</sup> wing,  
For a charm of powerful trouble,  
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

*All.* Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

*Third Witch.* Scale of dragon, tooth of  
wolf,  
Witches' mummy; <sup>7</sup> maw and gulf  
Of the ravin'd <sup>8</sup> salt-sea shark,  
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,  
Liver of blaspheming Jew,  
Gall of goat, and slips of yew  
Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,  
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,  
Finger of birth-strangled babe  
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,  
Make the gruel thick and slab: <sup>9</sup>  
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron, <sup>10</sup>  
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

---

5. "The slow-worm. About a foot long; its eyes were so small that it was supposed to have none."—*Sprague*.

6. Little owl.

7. Portions of Egyptian mummies were carried as charms by the people of that age and were supposed to have great medicinal value.

8. Ravenous.

9. Slimy.

10. Entrails.

SCENE I

Macbeth

*All.* Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

*Sec. Witch.* Cool it with a baboon's blood,  
Then the charm is firm and good.

*Enter* HECATE.

*Hec.* O, well done ! I commend your pains;  
And every one shall share i' the gains.

And now about the cauldron sing,  
Like elves and fairies in a ring,  
Enchanting all that you put in.

[*Music and a song:* "Black spirits," etc.]

[*Exit* Hecate.]

*Sec. Witch.* By the pricking of my thumbs,<sup>11</sup>  
Something wicked this way comes.

Open, locks,  
Whoever knocks !

*Enter* MACBETH.

*Macb.* How now, you secret, black and  
midnight hags !  
What is't you do ?

*All.* A deed without a name.

*Macb.* I conjure you, by that which you  
profess,  
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me :

---

11. One of the popular superstitions was that pricking or unusual sensations in the body foretold something unusual about to happen.

Though you untie the winds and let them fight  
Against the churches; though the yesty<sup>12</sup> waves  
Confound and swallow navigation up;  
Though bladed corn be lodg'd and trees blown  
down;

Though castles topple on their warders' heads;  
Though palaces and pyramids do slope  
Their heads to their foundations; though the  
treasure

Of nature's germens<sup>13</sup> tumble all together,  
Even till destruction sicken; answer me  
To what I ask you.

*First Witch.* Speak.

*Sec. Witch.* Demand.

*Third Witch.* We 'll answer.

*First Witch.* Say, if thou'dst rather hear it  
from our mouths,

Or from our masters?

*Macb.* Call 'em; let me see 'em.

*First Witch.* Pour in sow's blood, that hath  
eaten

Her nine farrow; grease that's sweaten  
From the murderer's gibbet throw  
Into the flame.

*All.* Come, high or low;  
Thyself and office deftly show !

<sup>12</sup>. Yeasty.

<sup>13</sup>. Germs or seeds.

SCENE I

Macbeth

*Thunder. First Apparition : an armed Head.*

*Macb.* Tell me, thou unknown powers—

*First Witch.* He knows thy thought :  
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

*First App.* Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth !  
beware Macduff ;  
Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me :  
enough. [*Descends.*]

*Macb.* Whate'er thou art, for thy good cau-  
tion, thanks ;  
Thou hast harp'd my fear aright : but one  
word more,—

*First Witch.* He will not be commanded ;  
here's another,  
More potent than the first.

*Thunder. Second Apparition : a bloody Child.*

*Sec. App.* Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth !

*Macb.* Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

*Sec. App.* Be bloody, bold, and resolute ;  
laugh to scorn  
The power of man, for none of woman born  
Shall harm Macbeth. [*Descends.*]

*Macb.* Then live, Macduff: what need I fear  
of thee ?  
But yet I'll make assurance double sure,



And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live;  
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,  
And sleep in spite of thunder.

*Thunder. Third Apparition: a Child crowned,  
with a tree in his hand.*

What is this,  
That rises like the issue of a king,  
And wears upon his baby brow the round  
And top<sup>14</sup> of sovereignty?

*All.* Listen, but speak not to't.

*Third App.* Be lion-mettled, proud, and  
take no care

Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers  
are:

Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until  
Great Birnam<sup>15</sup> wood to high Dunsinane hill  
Shall come against him. [*Descends.*

*Macb.* That will never be:

Who can impress the forest, bid the tree  
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bode-  
ments! <sup>16</sup> good!

Rebellion's head rise never, till the wood  
Of Birnam rise, and our high-plac'd Macbeth

<sup>14</sup>. The crown.

<sup>15</sup>. "Birnam village . . . is about fifteen miles N. N. W. of Perth. The wood covered Birnam hill, . . . Twelve miles E. S. E. lay Dunsinane (new Dunsinnan Hill) Hill, seven miles from Perth. On the top of the latter hill are ruins of an old fortress with ramparts and fosse, popularly called Macbeth's castle."—*Sprague*.

<sup>16</sup>. Prophecies.

SCENE I

Macbeth

Shall live the lease of Nature, pay his breath  
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart  
Throbs to know one thing: tell me,—if your  
art

Can tell so much,—shall Banquo's issue ever  
Reign in this kingdom?

*All.* Seek to know no more.

*Macb.* I will be satisfied: deny me this,  
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me  
know—

Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise is  
this? *[Hautboys.]*

*First Witch.* Show!

*Sec. Witch.* Show!

*Third Witch.* Show!

*All.* Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;  
Come like shadows, so depart!

*A show of eight Kings; the last with a glass  
in his hand. Banquo's ghost following.*

*Macb.* Thou art too like the spirit of Ban-  
quo; down!

Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs.—And thy  
hair,

Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.—  
A third is like the former.—Filthy hags!

Why do you show me this?—A fourth!—  
Start, eyes!—

What, will the line stretch out to the crack of  
doom? —

Another yet! — A seventh! — I'll see no  
more: —

And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass<sup>17</sup>  
Which shows me many more; and some I see  
That twofold balls and treble scepters carry;<sup>18</sup>  
Horrible sight! — Now I see 'tis true;  
For the blood-bolter'd<sup>19</sup> Banquo smiles upon  
me,

And points at them for his. —

What, is this so?

*First Witch.* Ay, sir, all this is so; but  
why

Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?

Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprights,

And show the best of our delights:

I'll charm the air to give a sound,

While you perform your antic round,

That this great king may kindly say,

Our duties did his welcome pay.

[*Music. The Witches dance, and then vanish,  
with Hecate.*

---

17. According to popular belief, the future was frequently foretold by visions shown in a mirror.

18. "This was intended as a compliment to King James the First, who first united the two islands and the three kingdoms under one head; whose house too was said to be descended from Banquo." — *Warburton*.  
"Shakespeare . . . represents Banquo, not only as an innocent but a noble

## SCENE I

## Macbeth

*Macb.* Where are they? Gone? Let this  
pernicious hour  
Stand aye accursed in the calendar! —  
Come in, without there!

*Enter LENNOX.*

*Len.* What's your grace's will?

*Macb.* Saw you the weird sisters?

*Len.* No, my lord.

*Macb.* Came they not by you?

*Len.* No indeed, my lord.

*Macb.* Infected be the air whereon they ride;  
And damn'd all those that trust them! — I did  
hear

The galloping of horse: who was't came by?

*Len.* 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring  
you word

Macduff is fled to England.

*Macb.* Fled to England!

*Len.* Ay, my good lord.

*Macb.* [*Aside.*] Time, thou anticipat'<sup>20</sup>st my  
dread exploits:

The flighty purpose never is o'ertook

---

character; whereas, according to history, he was confederate with Macbeth in the murder of Duncan." — *Stevens*.

19. Blood-clotted or bedaubed.

20. Forestalls.

Unless the deed go with it.<sup>21</sup> From this moment

The very firstlings of my heart shall be  
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,  
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought  
and done;

The castle of Macduff I will surprise,  
Seize upon Fife, give to the edge o' the sword  
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls  
That trace him in his line. No boasting like  
a fool;

This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.  
But no more sights! — Where are these gentlemen?

Come, bring me where they are. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *Fife. Room in Macduff's Castle.*<sup>22</sup>

*Enter* LADY MACDUFF, *her* Son, *and* Ross.

*L. Macd.* What had he done, to make him  
fly the land?

*Ross.* You must have patience, madam.

*L. Macd.* He had none;  
His flight was madness: when our actions do  
not,  
Our fears do make us traitors.

<sup>21</sup> Unless one acts when he conceives his purpose he can never accomplish it.

<sup>22</sup> Tradition says these murders took place at Dunne-marie Castle, Culross, in Perthshire about 15 miles from Edinburgh.

*Ross.* You know not  
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

*L. Macd.* Wisdom! to leave his wife, to  
leave his babes,  
His mansion and his titles, in a place  
From whence himself does fly? He loves us  
not;

He wants the natural touch:<sup>23</sup> for the poor  
wren,

The most diminutive of birds, will fight,  
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.  
All is the fear, and nothing is the love;  
As little is the wisdom, where the flight  
So runs against all reason.

*Ross.* My dearest coz,  
I pray you, school yourself; but for your hus-  
band,

He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows  
The fits o' the season.<sup>24</sup> I dare not speak much  
further;

But cruel are the times, when we are traitors  
And do not know ourselves;<sup>25</sup> when we hold<sup>26</sup>  
rumour

From what we fear, yet know not what we  
fear,

---

<sup>23.</sup> Sensibility.

<sup>24.</sup> "What befits the season."—*Heath.*

<sup>25.</sup> Know ourselves to be traitors.

<sup>26.</sup> Hear and understand.

But float upon a wild and violent sea  
Each way and move.<sup>27</sup> I take my leave of you;  
Shall not be long but I'll be here again.  
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb  
upward

To what they were before. My pretty cousin,  
Blessing upon you !

*L. Macd.* Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless.

*Ross.* I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,  
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort:  
I take my leave at once. [Exit.

*L. Macd.* Sirrah,<sup>28</sup> your father's dead :  
And what will you do now ? How will you live ?

*Son.* As birds do, mother.

*L. Macd.* What, with worms and flies ?

*Son.* With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

*L. Macd.* Poor bird ! thou'dst never fear  
the net nor lime,  
The pitfall nor the gin.

*Son.* Why should I, mother ? Poor birds  
they are not set for.<sup>29</sup>

---

27. Motion or movement.

28. Not always a term of reproach. Parents so addressed children.

29. Traps are not set for the poor birds—why then for me ?

SCENE II

Macbeth

My father is not dead, for all your saying.

*L. Macd.* Yes, he is dead: how wilt thou do,  
for a father?

*Son.* Nay, how will you do for a husband?

*L. Macd.* Why, I can buy me twenty at  
any market.

*Son.* Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

*L. Macd.* Thou speak'st with all thy wit,  
and yet, i' faith,

With wit enough for thee.

*Son.* Was my father a traitor, mother?

*L. Macd.* Ay, that he was.

*Son.* What is a traitor?

*L. Macd.* Why, one that swears and lies.

*Son.* And be all traitors that do so?

*L. Macd.* Everyone that does so is a traitor,  
and must be hanged.

*Son.* And must they all be hanged that  
swear and lie?

*L. Macd.* Every one.

*Son.* Who must hang them?

*L. Macd.* Why, the honest men.

*Son.* Then the liars and swearers are fools,  
for there are liars and swearers enow to beat  
the honest men and hang up them.

*L. Macd.* Now, God help thee, poor mon-  
key! But how wilt thou do for a father?

*Son.* If he were dead, you'd weep for him:



if you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

*L. Macd.* Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Mess.* Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,  
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.  
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly:  
If you will take a homely man's advice,  
Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.

To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage;  
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,

Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!  
I dare abide no longer. *[Exit.]*

*L. Macd.* Whither should I fly?  
I have done no harm. But I remember now  
I am in this earthly world, where to do harm  
Is often laudable; to do good, sometime  
Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,  
Do I put up that womanly defense,  
To say I have done no harm?—

*Enter Murderers.*

What are these faces?

SCENE III

**Macbeth**

*First Mur.* Where is your husband?

*L. Macd.* I hope, in no place so unsanctified

Where such as thou mayst find him.

*First Mur.* He's a traitor.

*Son.* Thou liest, thou shaghair'd villain!

*First Mur.* What, you egg!

Young fry of treachery! [*Stabbing him.*]

*Son.* He has kill'd me, mother:

Run away, I pray you! [*Dies.*]

[*Exit Lady Macduff, crying "Murder!"*]

*Exeunt Murderers, following her.*

SCENE III. *England. Before the King's Palace.*

*Enter MALCOLM and MACDUFF.*

*Mal.* Let us seek out some desolate shade,  
and there

Weep our sad bosoms empty.

*Macd.* Let us rather

Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good  
men

Bestride our downfall birthdom.<sup>30</sup> Each new  
morn

New widows howl, new orphans cry, new  
sorrows

---

<sup>30</sup>. Downfallen birthright.

Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds  
As if it felt with Scotland and yell'd out  
Like syllable of dolour.

*Mal.* What I believe, I'll wail ;  
What know, believe; and what I can redress,  
As I shall find the time to friend,<sup>31</sup> I will.  
What you have spoke, it may be so per-  
chance.

This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our  
tongues,  
Was once thought honest: you have lov'd him  
well;  
He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young;  
but something  
You may discern of him through me and  
wisdom<sup>32</sup>

To offer up a weak poor innocent lamb  
To appease an angry god.

*Macd.* I am not treacherous.

*Mal.* But Macbeth is.  
A good and virtuous nature may recoil<sup>33</sup>  
In an imperial charge. But I shall crave  
your pardon;  
That which you are my thoughts cannot  
transpose;

---

31. Favorable or propitious.

32. And that it is wisdom.

33. Give way.

## SCENE III

## Macbeth

Angels are bright still, though the brightest  
fell;

Though all things foul would wear the brows  
of grace,

Yet grace must still look so.

*Macd.* I have lost my hopes.

*Mal.* Perchance even there where I did find  
my doubts.

Why in that rawness<sup>34</sup> left you wife and  
child,

Those precious motives, those strong knots of  
love,

Without leave-taking? I pray you,

Let not my jealousies<sup>35</sup> be your dishonours,

But mine own safeties: you may be rightly  
just,

Whatever I shall think.

*Macd.* Bleed, bleed, poor country!

Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,

For goodness dare not check thee! wear thou  
thy wrongs;

The title is affeered!<sup>36</sup>—Fare thee well,  
lord:

I would not be the villain that thou think'st

---

34. Hasty manner.

35. Suspicions occasioned by the frequent arrivals from Scotland.

36. "A law term for *confirmed*,"—*Pope*.

For the whole space that's in the tyrant's  
grasp,  
And the rich East to boot.

*Mal.* Be not offended:  
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.  
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;  
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a  
gash

Is added to her wounds: I think withal  
There would be hands uplifted in my right;  
And here from gracious England have I offer  
Of goodly thousands; but for all this,  
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head  
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country  
Shall have more vices than it had before,  
More suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,  
By him that shall succeed.

*Macd.* What should he be?

*Mal.* It is myself I mean; in whom I  
know

All the particulars of vice so grafted  
That, when they shall be open'd black Mac-  
beth

Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor  
state

Esteem him as a lamb, being compar'd  
With my confineless harms.

*Macd.* Not in the legions

Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd  
In evils to top Macbeth.

*Mal.* I grant him bloody,  
Luxurious,<sup>37</sup> avaricious, false, deceitful,  
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin  
That has a name; but there's no bottom,  
none,

In my voluptuousness; your wives, your  
daughters,  
Your matrons and your maids, could not  
fill up

The cistern of my lust; and my desire  
All continent impediments would o'erbear  
That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth  
Than such an one to reign.

*Macd.* Boundless intemperance  
In nature is a tyranny, it hath been  
The untimely emptying of the happy throne,  
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet  
To take upon you what is yours; you may  
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,  
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hood-  
wink.

We have willing dames enough; there can  
not be  
That vulture in you to devour so many

---

37. Lascivious.

As will to greatness dedicate themselves,  
Finding it so inclin'd.

*Mal.* With this there grows  
In my most ill-compos'd affection such  
A stanchless avarice that, were I king,  
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,  
Desire his jewels and this other's house;  
And my more-having would be as a sauce  
To make me hunger more, that I should forge  
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,  
Destroying them for wealth.

*Macd.* This avarice  
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious  
root  
Than summer-seeming<sup>38</sup> lust, and it hath been  
The sword of our slain kings: yet do not fear;  
Scotland has foisons<sup>39</sup> to fill up your will,  
Of your mere own. All these are portable,  
With other graces weigh'd.

*Mal.* But I have none: the king-becoming  
graces,  
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,  
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,  
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,  
I have no relish of them, but abound

---

38. Burning like the summer and then passing away.

39. Plenty; used in speaking of harvests.

In the division of each several crime,  
Acting in many ways. Nay, had I power, I  
should

Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,  
Uproar the universal peace, confound  
All unity on earth.

*Macd.* O Scotland, Scotland !

*Mal.* If such a one be fit to govern, speak:  
I am as I have spoken.

*Macd.* Fit to govern !

No, not to live.— O nation miserable !  
With an untitled tyrant, bloody-scepter'd,  
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days  
again,

Since that the truest issue of thy throne  
By his own interdiction stands accurs'd,  
And does blaspheme<sup>40</sup> his breed ?—Thy royal  
father

Was a most sainted king: the queen that bore  
thee,

Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,  
Died every day she liv'd.<sup>41</sup>—Fare thee well !  
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself  
Have banish'd me from Scotland.—O my  
breast,

Thy hope ends here !

<sup>40</sup>. Slander.

<sup>41</sup>. Every day was a preparation for death.



*Mal.* Macduff, this noble passion,  
Child of integrity, hath from my soul  
Wip'd the black scruples, reconcil'd my  
thoughts  
To thy good truth and honor. Devilish Mac-  
beth  
By many of these trains hath sought to win  
me  
Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me  
From over-credulous haste: but God above  
Deal between thee and me ! for even now  
I put myself to thy direction, and  
Unspeak mine own detraction, here abjure  
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,  
For strangers to my nature. I am yet  
Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,  
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,  
At no time broke my faith, would not betray  
The devil to his fellow, and delight  
No less in truth than life: my first false speak-  
ing  
Was this upon himself. What I am truly,  
Is thine and my poor country's to command,  
Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,  
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,  
Already at a point, was setting forth.  
Now we'll together, and the chance of good-  
ness

SCENE III

**Macbeth**

Be like our warranted quarrel !<sup>42</sup> Why are you  
silent ?

*Macd.* Such welcome and unwelcome things  
at once

'Tis hard to reconcile.

*Enter a Doctor.*

*Mal.* Well, more anon.— Comes the king  
forth, I pray you ?

*Doct.* Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched  
souls

- That stay his cure: their malady convinces<sup>43</sup>  
The great assay<sup>44</sup> of art; but at his touch,  
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,  
They presently amend.

*Mal.* I thank you, doctor.

*[Exit Doctor.]*

*Macd.* What's the disease he means ?

*Mal.* 'Tis called the evil:<sup>45</sup>

A most miraculous work in this good king;  
Which often, since my here-remain in England,  
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,

42. "May the chance of success be as certain as the justice of our quarrel."— *Clarendon*.

43. Overpowers.

44. Attempt. That is, it baffles the most skilled physician.

45. Scrofula was known as "King's Evil," and it was believed that the touch of the king would cure it. Pope Alexander III recognized the miraculous power of Edward, and down to the beginning of the eighteenth century the English kings were believed to possess this power, which they frequently exerted — at least they "touched" many sufferers.

Himself best knows; but strangely-visited people,  
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,  
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,  
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,  
Put on with holy prayers; and 't is spoken,  
To the succeeding royalty he leaves  
The healing benediction. With this strange  
virtue,  
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,  
And sundry blessings hang about his throne  
That speak him full of grace.

*Enter Ross.*

*Macd.* See, who comes here?

*Mal.* My countryman; but yet I know him  
not.

*Macd.* My ever-gentle cousin, welcome  
hither.

*Mal.* I know him now. Good God, be-  
times remove

The means that make us strangers!

*Ross.* Sir, amen.

*Macd.* Stands Scotland where it did?

*Ross.* Alas, poor country!  
Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot  
Be call'd our mother, but our grave; where  
nothing,

## SCENE III

## Macbeth

But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;  
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rent  
the air

Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow  
seems

A modern ecstasy: the dead man's knell  
Is there scarce ask'd for who,<sup>46</sup> and good men's  
lives

Expire before the flowers in their caps,<sup>47</sup>  
Dying or ere they sicken.<sup>48</sup>

*Macd.* O, relation

Too nice, and yet too true !

*Mal.* What's the newest grief ?

*Ross.* That of an hour's age doth hiss the  
speaker;

Each minute teems a new one.

*Macd.* How does my wife ?

*Ross.* Why, well.

*Macd.* And all my children ?

*Ross.* Well too.

*Macd.* The tyrant has not batter'd at  
their peace ?

*Ross.* No; they were well at peace when  
I did leave 'em.

---

46. People scarcely ask for whom the death-knell rings.

47. It was a Scotch custom for soldiers when marching to stick sprigs of  
heather in their caps.

48. Before they die or even sicken.

*Macd.* Be not a niggard of your speech:  
how goes 't ?

*Ross.* When I came hither to transport  
the tidings,  
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a  
rumor

Of many worthy fellows that were out ;<sup>49</sup>  
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,  
For that<sup>50</sup> I saw the tyrant's power a-foot.  
Now is the time of help ; your eye in Scotland  
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,  
To doff their dire distresses.

*Mal.* Be 't their comfort  
We are coming thither ; gracious England hath  
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand  
men ;

An older and a better soldier none  
That Christendom gives out.

*Ross.* Would I could answer  
This comfort with the like ! But I have words  
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,  
Where hearing should not latch them.

*Macd.* What concern they ?  
The general cause ? or is it a fee-grief<sup>51</sup>

---

49. A common phrase used later to express the idea that men were engaged in rebellion.

50. Because.

51. Grief with but a single owner.

SCENE III

**Macbeth**

Due to some single breast ?

*Ross.* No mind that's honest  
But in it shares some woe, though the main  
part

Pertains to you alone.

*Macd.* If it be mine,  
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

*Ross.* Let not your ears despise my tongue  
for ever,  
Which shall possess them with the heaviest  
sound  
That ever yet they heard.

*Macd.* Hum ! I guess at it.

*Ross.* Your castle is surprised; your wife  
and babes  
Savagely slaughter'd; to relate the manner  
Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer,  
To add the death of you.

*Mal.* Merciful heaven !—  
What, man ! ne'er pull your hat upon your  
brows ;  
Give sorrow words: the grief that does not  
speak  
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it  
break.

*Macd.* My children too ?

*Ross.* Wife, children, servants, all  
That could be found.

*Macd.* And I must be from thence !—  
My wife kill'd too !

*Ross.* I have said.

*Mal.* Be comforted:  
Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,  
To cure this deadly grief.

*Macd.* He has no children.— All my  
pretty ones ?  
Did you say all ? — O hell-kite ! — All ?  
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam  
At one fell swoop ?

*Mal.* Dispute it like a man.

*Macd.* I shall do so;  
But I must also feel it as a man:  
I cannot but remember such things were,  
That were most precious to me.— Did heaven  
look on,  
And would not take their part ? Sinful  
Macduff,  
They were all struck for thee ! naught that  
I am,  
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,  
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest  
them now !

*Mal.* Be this the whetstone of your sword:  
let grief  
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart,  
enrage it.

## SCENE III

## Macbeth

*Macd.* O, I could play the woman with  
mine eyes,  
And braggart with my tongue ! — But, gentle  
heavens,  
Cut short all intermission; front to front  
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;  
Within my sword's length set him; if he scape  
Heaven forgive him too !

*Mal.* This tune goes manly.  
Come, go we to the king: our power is ready;  
Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth  
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above  
Put on their instruments.<sup>52</sup> Receive what  
cheer you may;  
The night is long that never finds the day.  
[*Exeunt.*

---

52. Put forward us, their instruments.





## Act V

### SCENE I. *Dunsinane. Ante-Room in the Castle.*

*Enter a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting  
Gentlewoman.*

*Doct.* I have two nights watched with you,  
but can perceive no truth in your report.  
When was it she last walked?

*Gen.* Since his majesty went into the field,  
I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her  
nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take  
forth paper, fold it, write upon 't, read it,  
afterward seal it, and again return to bed; yet  
all this while in a most fast sleep.

*Doct.* A great perturbation in nature, to  
receive at once the benefit of sleep and do the  
effects of watching! In this slumbery agita-  
tion, besides her walking and other actual  
performances, what at any time have you  
heard her say?

*Gen.* That, sir, which I will not report  
after her.

*Doct.* You may to me, and it is most meet you should.

*Gen.* Neither to you nor any one, having no witness to confirm my speech.

*Enter LADY MACBETH, with a taper.*

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise; and,  
Upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

*Doct.* How came she by that light?

*Gen.* Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

*Doct.* You see, her eyes are open.

*Gen.* Ay, but their sense is shut.

*Doct.* What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

*Gen.* It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue this a quarter of an hour.

*Lady M.* Yet here's a spot.

*Doct.* Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

*Lady M.* Out, damned spot! out, I say!  
—One: two: why, then, 'tis time to do't—  
Hell is murky!—Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier,

and afraid? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? — Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

*Doct.* Do you mark that?

*Lady M.* The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now? — What, will these hands ne'er be clean? — No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

*Doct.* Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

*Gen.* She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that; heaven knows what she has known.

*Lady M.* Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

*Doct.* What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

*Gen.* I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

*Doct.* Well, well, well, —

*Gen.* Pray God it be, sir.

*Doct.* This disease is beyond my practice: yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

*Lady M.* Wash your hands, put on your

nightgown; look not so pale.— I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

*Doct.* Even so?

*Lady M.* To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand.

What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed. *[Exit.]*

*Doct.* Will she go now to bed?

*Gen.* Directly.

*Doct.* Foul whisperings are abroad. Unnatural deeds

Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds  
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.

More needs she the divine than the physician.—

God, God forgive us all!—Look after her;  
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,  
And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night;  
My mind she has mated,<sup>1</sup> and amaz'd my sight.  
I think, but dare not speak.

*Gen.* Good night, good doctor.

*[Exeunt.]*

---

1. Dismayed.

## SCENE II

## Macbeth

SCENE II. *The country near Dunsinane.*

*Drum and colors. Enter MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, and Soldiers.*

*Ment.* The English power is near, led on  
by Malcolm,  
His uncle Siward, and the good Macduff;  
Revenge burn in them; for their dear<sup>2</sup> cause  
Would to the bleeding<sup>3</sup> and the grim alarm  
Excite the mortified man.<sup>4</sup>

*Ang.* Near Birnam wood  
Shall we well meet them; that way are they  
coming.

*Caith.* Who knows if Donalbain be with  
his brother?

*Len.* For certain, sir, he is not. I have  
a file  
Of all the gentry: there is Siward's son  
And many unrough<sup>5</sup> youths, that even now  
Protest their first of manhood.

*Ment.* What does the tyrant?

*Caith.* Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies.

---

2. Great or exciting.

3. Actions of blood.

4. Perhaps, one who has abandoned himself to despair; perhaps, one who was dead to the world, having mortified the flesh by self-denial and self-inflicted punishment.

5. Smooth-chinned, unbearded.

Some say he's mad; others, that lesser hate  
him,

Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,  
He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause<sup>6</sup>  
Within the belt of rule.

*Ang.* Now does he feel  
His secret murders sticking on his hands;  
Now minutely<sup>7</sup> revolts upbraid his faith-  
breach:

Those he commands move only in command,  
Nothing in love; now does he feel his title  
Hang loose about him like a giant's robe  
Upon a dwarfish thief.

*Ment.* Who then shall blame  
His pester'd senses to recoil and start,  
When all that is within him does condemn  
Itself for being there?

*Caith.* Well, march we on,  
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed:  
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,<sup>8</sup>  
And with him pour we in our country's purge  
Each drop of us.

*Len.* Or so much as it needs,  
To dew the sovereign flower and drown the  
weeds.

---

6. Disorganized or disordered party.

7. Every minute.

8. The allusion is to Duncan.

SCENE III

**Macbeth**

Make we our march toward Birnam.

*[Exeunt, marching.]*

SCENE III. *Dunsinane. Room in the Castle.*

*Enter* MACBETH, Doctor, and Attendants.

*Macb.* Bring me no more reports; let them  
fly all:

Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,  
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy  
Malcolm?

Was he not born of woman? The spirits that  
know

All mortal consequences have pronounced me  
thus:

'Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of  
woman

Shall e'er have power upon thee.' Then fly,  
false thanes,

And mingle with the English epicures:<sup>9</sup>

The mind I sway by and the heart I bear

Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with  
fear

*Enter a Servant.*

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd  
loon!

---

<sup>9</sup> "Gluttony was a common charge brought by the Scotch against their wealthier neighbors."— *Clarendon*.



Where got'st thou that goose look ?

*Serv.* There is ten thousand —

*Macb.* Geese, villain ?

*Serv.* Soldiers, sir.

*Macb.* Go prick thy face, and over-red  
thy fear,

Thou lily-liver'd boy. What soldiers, patch ?<sup>10</sup>  
Death of thy soul ! those linen cheeks of thine  
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-  
face ?

*Serv.* The English force, so please you.

*Macb.* Take thy face hence.—

[*Exit Servant.*]

Seyton ! — I am sick at heart.

When I behold — Seyton, I say ! — This push  
Will cheer me ever, or dis-ease me now.

I have liv'd long enough: my way of life  
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf,  
And that which should accompany old age,  
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,  
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,  
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour,  
breath,

Which the poor heart would fain deny, and  
dare not.—

Seyton !

---

10. Fool.

*Enter SEYTON.*

*Sey.* What's your gracious pleasure?

*Macb.* What news more?

*Sey.* All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.

*Macb.* I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hack'd.

Give me my armour.

*Sey.* 'Tis not needed yet.

*Macb.* I'll put it on.

Send out more horses, skirr<sup>11</sup> the country round;

Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour.—

How does your patient, doctor?

*Doct.* Not so sick, my lord,  
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,  
That keep her from her rest.

*Macb.* Cure her of that.  
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,  
And with some sweet oblivious<sup>12</sup> antidote  
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous  
stuff

---

11. Scour.

12. An antidote that will cause forgetfulness.

Which weighs upon the heart ?

*Doct.*                   Therein the patient  
Must minister to himself.

*Macb.* Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none  
of it.—

Come, put my armour on; give me my staff.—  
Seyton, send out. — Doctor, the thanes fly  
from me.—

Come, sir, dispatch.— If thou couldst, doctor,  
cast

The water of my land, find her disease,  
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,  
I would applaud thee to the very echo,  
That should applaud again.— Pull't off, I  
say.<sup>13</sup>

What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative  
drug,

Would scour these English hence? Hear'st  
thou of them?

*Doct.* Ay, my good lord; your royal prepa-  
ration

Makes us hear something.

*Macb.*                   Bring it after me.<sup>14</sup>—  
I will not be afraid of death and bane  
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane. [*Exit.*]

*Doct.* Were I from Dunsinane away and  
clear,

---

<sup>13.</sup> Spoken to Seyton, who is working on the armor.

<sup>14.</sup> Spoken to Seyton. Some part of the armor.

Profit again should hardly draw me here.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV. *Country near Birnam Wood.*

*Drum and colors. Enter MALCOLM, old SIWARD and his SON, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS, and SOLDIERS, marching.*

*Mal.* Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand  
That <sup>15</sup> chambers will be safe.

*Ment.* We doubt it nothing.

*Siw.* What wood is this before us?

*Ment.* The wood of Birnam.

*Mal.* Let every soldier hew him down a bough,  
And bear't before him; thereby shall we shadow  
The numbers of our host, and make discovery <sup>16</sup>  
Err in report of us.

*Soldiers.* It shall be done.

*Siw.* We learn no other but the confident tyrant  
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure

---

<sup>15.</sup> When.

<sup>16.</sup> Those who discover us.

Our setting down before't.

*Mal.* 'Tis his main hope;  
For where there is advantage to be given,  
Both more and less have given him the  
revolt,<sup>17</sup>

And none serve with him but constrained  
things

Whose hearts are absent too.

*Macd.* Let our just censures  
Attend the true event,<sup>18</sup> and put we on  
Industrious soldiership.

*Siw.* The time approaches  
That will with due decision make us know  
What we shall say we have and what we owe.<sup>19</sup>  
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes re-  
late,  
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate;  
Towards which advance the war.

[*Exeunt, marching.*]

---

17. The meaning of these last two lines is very obscure and has been much commented upon. It may mean that where they had a favorable opportunity of deserting him both great and small have revolted.

18. Let our judgment await the outcome of the contest, while we continue to be industrious soldiers.

19. What rights we have and what duties we owe.

SCENE V. *Dunsinane. Within the Castle.*

*Enter MACBETH, SEYTON, and Soldiers, with drum and colors.*

*Macb.* Hang out our banners on the outward walls;  
The cry is still "They come!" Our castle's strength  
Will laugh a siege to scorn; here let them lie  
Till famine and the ague eat them up.  
Were they not forc'd<sup>20</sup> with those that should  
be ours,  
We might have met them dareful,<sup>21</sup> beard to  
beard,  
And beat them backward home.

*[A cry of women within.]*

What is that noise?

*Sey.* It is the cry of women, my good lord.

*[Exit.]*

*Macb.* I have almost forgot the taste of  
fears:  
The time has been, my senses would have  
cool'd  
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair<sup>22</sup>  
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir

---

<sup>20.</sup> Reinforced.

<sup>21.</sup> Full of daring. Bravely.

<sup>22.</sup> "Hairy scalp."—*Dyce*.

As life were in't. I have supp'd full with  
horrors;  
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,  
Cannot once start me.—

*Re-enter SEYTON.*

Wherefore was that cry?

*Sey.* The queen, my lord, is dead.

*Macb.* She should have died hereafter;  
There would have been a time for such a  
word.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
To the last syllable of recorded time,  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief  
candle!

Life 's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more; it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.—

*Enter a Messenger.*

Thou com'st to use thy tongue; thy story  
quickly.

*Mess.* Gracious my lord,

I should report that which I say I saw,  
But know not how to do it.

*Macb.* Well, say, sir.

*Mess.* As I did stand my watch upon the  
hill,

I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,  
The wood began to move.

*Macb.* Liar and slave!

*Mess.* Let me endure your wrath, if't be  
not so:

Within this three mile may you see it coming;  
I say, a moving grove.

*Macb.* If thou speak'st false,  
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive  
Till famine cling<sup>23</sup> thee; if thy speech be  
sooth,

I care not if thou dost for me as much.—

I pull in<sup>24</sup> resolution, and begin

To doubt the equivocation of the fiend  
That lies like truth: "Fear not, till Birnam  
wood

Do come to Dunsinane;" and now a wood  
Comes toward Dunsinane.—Arm, arm, and  
out!—

If this which he avouches does appear,

---

<sup>23</sup>. Shivel.

<sup>24</sup>. *I pull in resolution as I would a horse* may be the meaning; or *I pull* in resolution, that is, my heart grows sick.



There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.  
I gin to be aweary of the sun,  
And wish the estate o' the world<sup>25</sup> were now  
undone.—

Ring the alarum-bell! — Blow, wind! come,  
wrack!

At least we'll die with harness on our back.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI. *Dunsinane. Before the  
Castle.*

*Drum and colors. Enter MALCOLM, old  
SIWARD, MACDUFF, and their Army,  
with boughs.*

*Mal.* Now near enough; your leavy screens  
throw down,  
And show like those you are.— You, worthy  
uncle

Shall with my cousin, your right-noble son,  
Lead our first battle; worthy Macduff and we  
Shall take upon's what else remains to do,  
According to our order.

*Siw.*

Fare you well.

Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,  
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

*Macd.* Make all our trumpets speak; give  
them all breath,

---

<sup>25</sup>. The settled order of things.

SCENE VII

**Macbeth**

Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Another Part of the Field.*

*Alarums. Enter MACBETH.*

*Macb.* They have tied me to a stake; I  
cannot fly,  
But, bear-like, I must fight the course.  
What's he  
That was not born of woman? Such a one  
Am I to fear, or none.

*Enter young SIWARD.*

*Yo. Siw.* What is thy name?

*Macb.* Thou'lt be afraid to  
hear it.

*Yo. Siw.* No; though thou call'st thyself  
a hotter name  
Than any is in hell.

*Macb.* My name's Macbeth.

*Yo. Siw.* The devil himself could not pronounce a title,  
More hateful to mine ear.

*Macb.* No, nor more fearful.

*Yo. Siw.* Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with  
my sword  
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st,

[*They fight, and young Siward is slain.*]

*Macb.* Thou wast born of  
woman.—

But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to  
scorn,

Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born.

[*Exit.*]

*Alarums. Enter MACDUFF.*

*Macd.* That way the noise is.—Tyrant,  
show thy face!

If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of  
mine,

My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me  
still.

I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose  
arms

Are hir'd to bear their staves: either thou,  
Macbeth,

Or else my sword with an unbatter'd edge  
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou  
shouldst be;

By this great clatter, one of greatest note  
Seems bruited.<sup>26</sup> Let me find him, fortune!  
And more I beg not. [*Exit. Alarums.*]

---

<sup>26</sup>. Noised.

SCENE VIII

Macbeth

*Enter MALCOLM and old SIWARD.*

*Siw.* This way, my lord. The castle's  
gently render'd:  
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;  
The noble thanes do bravely in the war;  
The day almost itself professes yours,  
And little is to do.

*Mal.* We have met with foes  
That strike beside us.<sup>27</sup>

*Siw.* Enter, sir, the castle.

*[Exeunt. Alarum.]*

SCENE VIII. *Another Part of the Field.*

*Enter MACBETH.*

*Macb.* Why should I play the Roman fool,  
and die  
On mine own sword?<sup>28</sup> whiles I see lives,<sup>29</sup>  
the gashes  
Do better upon them.

*Enter MACDUFF.*

*Macd.* Turn, hell-hound, turn !

*Macb.* Of all men else I have avoided  
thee:

---

<sup>27</sup> The deserters from Macbeth.

<sup>28</sup> Not an infrequent occurrence among the old Romans. Brutus  
and others killed themselves by running upon or falling upon their swords.

<sup>29</sup> Living men.

But get thee back; my soul is too much charg'd  
With blood of thine already.

*Macd.* I have no words;  
My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain  
Than terms can give thee out! [*They fight.*

*Macb.* Thou lovest labour.  
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant<sup>30</sup> air  
With thy keen sword impress as make me  
bleed:

Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;  
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield  
To one of woman born.

*Macd.* Despair thy charm,  
And let the angel whom thou still hast serv'd  
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's  
womb

Untimely ripp'd.

*Macb.* Accurs'd be that tongue that tells  
me so,

For it hath cow'd my better part of man!<sup>31</sup>  
And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd,  
That palter with us in a double sense;  
That keep the word of promise to our ear,  
And break it to our hope. — I'll not fight with  
thee.

*Macd.* Then yield thee, coward,

---

30. Invulnerable.

31. The better part of my manhood.

## SCENE VIII

## Macbeth

And live to be the show and gaze o' the time:  
We'll have thee as our rarer monsters are,  
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,  
"Here may you see the tyrant."

*Macb.* I will not yield  
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's  
feet,

And to be baited with the rabble's curse.  
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,  
And thou oppos'd, being of no woman born,  
Yet I will try the last. Before my body  
I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff,  
And damn'd be him that first cries "Hold,  
enough!"

*[Exeunt, fighting. Alarum.*

*Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and  
colors, MALCOLM, old SIWARD, ROSS, the  
other Thanes, and Soldiers.*

*Mal.* I would the friends we miss were safe  
arriv'd.

*Siw.* Some must go off; and yet, by these  
I see

So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

*Mal.* Macduff is missing, and your noble  
son.

*Ross.* Your son, my lord, has paid a sol-  
dier's debt

He only liv'd but till he was a man;  
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd

In the unshrinking station where he fought,  
But like a man he died.

*Siw.* Then he is dead !

*Ross.* Ay, and brought off the field; your  
cause of sorrow

Must not be measur'd by his worth; for  
then

It hath no end.

*Siw.* Had he his hurts before !

*Ross.* Ay, on the front,

*Siw.* Why then, God's soldier be he !

Had I as many sons as I have hairs,  
I would not wish them to a fairer death;  
And so his knell is knoll'd.

*Mal.* He's worth more sorrow,  
And that I'll spend for him.

*Siw.* He's worth no more:  
They say he parted well and paid his score;  
And so God be with him ! Here comes newer  
comfort.

*Re-enter MACDUFF, with MACBETH'S head.*

*Macd.* Hail, king ! for so thou art. Be-  
hold, where stands  
The usurper's cursed head; the time is free.

I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's  
pearl,<sup>32</sup>

That speak my salutation in their minds;  
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:

Hail, King of Scotland!

*All.* Hail, King of Scotland!

[*Flourish.*]

*Mal.* We shall not spend a large expense  
of time

Before we reckon with your several loves,  
And make us even with you. My thanes and  
kinsmen,

Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scot-  
land

In such an honour nam'd.<sup>33</sup> What's more  
to do,

Which would be<sup>34</sup> planted newly with the  
time,—

As calling home our exil'd friends abroad  
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,  
Producing forth the cruel ministers  
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,

---

32. His chief supporters. The nobles of his land.

33. "He created manie earles, lords, barons, and knights. Many of them that before were thanes, were at this time made earles, as Fife, Menteth, Atholl, Lennox, Murrey, Cathnes, Rosse and Angus. These were the first earles that have been heard of among the Scottishmen, (as their histories doo make mention)." — *Holinshead*.

34. What more there is to do which should be done.



Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent  
hands

Took off her life,—this, and what needful  
else

That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace  
We will perform in measure, time, and place:  
So, thanks to all at once and to each one,  
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

*[Flourish. Exeunt.]*

# **Part Twelve**

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## **The Drama**

**(Continued)**



## The Drama

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The pure drama is objective, the author keeping himself out of sight as much as possible. His characters appear, speak their parts and vanish with no explanatory words from him except the occasional stage direction limited to the fewest possible words. There is no description, except when the actors give an account of something that does not occur upon the stage. There is little of narration, except to explain what does not appear upon the scene or to give clearness to the action. Argument is not infrequent though it is usually in the form of a moving appeal to the emotions rather than to the reason. The play often leads to exposition and many dramas are written with the evident intent of teaching a deep and forceful lesson.

The drama shows man in action and develops his character before the reader, but it is by acts and speech and not by direct description from the author. It deals with all human interests and frequently supernatural manifestations are introduced and become important factors in the development of the plot, particularly when they are believed in by the people who appear in the drama. But in general it is a study of life and character.

Primarily the drama is to be heard, not read,

## The Drama

and consequently its style is usually clear and its meaning easily apprehended, but the complexity of its incidents and the intricacies of its plot make it difficult to follow. The rapidity of its action, the necessity of gathering the meaning from a single hearing, and the intensity of feeling aroused, would all unite to confuse the hearer were it not for the skill of the actor and the appropriateness of the stage settings. By the aid of these, understanding is in most cases not difficult. The changing scenery, the dress of the actors, their movements, the tones of their voices, and the expression of their faces all aid the hearer. But the interpretation then becomes that of the actor so that the listener is once removed from the author. Moreover, to the actor everything is subservient to dramatic effect and the study of an Othello descends into an effort to excite an audience rather than to portray correctly the shifting passions of the jealous Moor. The poet's creation is adapted to the actor's use by the omission of scenes, changes of scenes, and additions of scenes, by such verbal alterations and phrasal transpositions that one does not see Shakespeare's Shylock demanding his pound of unwilling flesh but watches Irving's Shylock whetting his savage knife; Hamlet is lost in Booth, and Juliet weeps in the tears of Mary Anderson.

This is not intended to cheapen the fame of these great actors nor is it a sneer at their marvel-

## The Drama

ous interpretations. But the pleasure a person derives from listening to their thrilling utterances is as distinct from that which comes to the appreciative reader as the pleasures of the palate differ from those of the eye. To the reader everything is his own. He carries his own theater with him. The scenery he must himself construct and he may alter it at will; the costumes and personal appearance of the characters are the creations of his own mind; his thunder has no metallic sound and his lightning always flashes. He may bring his favorites back with many an encore and may show his disapproval with hisses that would drown the gallery. He may linger over the passages he loves and find new encouragement in his defeats and ever fresh joys for his hours of gloom. He is never hurried: the lights never go out, the curtain is never rung down.



## A Brief History of the English Drama

---

The earliest European dramas of which we have any record were the plays performed in ancient Greece five hundred years before Christ. There were very few characters introduced, sometimes only one or two, and a chorus was the most important part of the representation. This chorus served to fill the gaps in the action, to state what had preceded and at times even to comment upon the actors, to exhort or to praise or condemn their behavior. The Greek dramatists carefully followed the so-called rule of *three unities*: unity of time, whereby the action must be compressed into one day; unity of place, by which only one place must be represented; and unity of action, whereby the movement of the piece must be continuous, all the incidents be connected so as to form one main line of thought. The rule of three unities was followed very closely by the French dramatists up to comparatively recent times; but in England, beginning with the Elizabethan era, no restraint was placed upon dramatic technique except unity of action, which still remains essential.

During the Middle Ages the drama was represented by *miracle* and *mystery plays* dealing with



## The English Drama

sacred history. They differed in subject only. The miracle plays represented the lives of saints and their miraculous deeds; the mysteries, the mysterious doctrines of Christianity and various biblical events. During an age when preaching was unusual, the clergy reached the souls of their people by means of these rude plays which were at first given in churches, but later when the town guilds and trade organizations began to present them, the stage was a traveling cart, roughly fitted up with rude scenery. Still later, before theaters were built, the wandering players acted in inn yards or courtyards. Female parts were always taken by boys, and it was not until after Shakespeare's time that women appeared on the stage.

In the reign of Henry VI the mysteries were in part superseded by the *morality plays*, although the former did not wholly go out of style until the time of Elizabeth. The passion play given every ten years at Oberammergau, Bavaria, is a survival of the old mystery play. The moralities personified the virtues and vices common to man, and attempted to teach moral lessons by allegorical representations. When popular interest in these dramas began to lag, current topics were introduced into the dialogue, and characters from real life appeared on the stage for the first time. Early in the sixteenth century John Heywood invented a farcical composition called *The Interlude* to relieve the tiresome monotony of existing plays.

## The English Drama

But it was in 1540 that the first comedy appeared, and it is not too much to say that this play marks the beginning of modern English drama. Nicholas Udall, head master of Eton College, being accustomed to write Latin plays for his boys, concluded to try his hand at an English drama. The result was *Ralph Royster Doyster*, the first comedy. The characters are well drawn, the action continuous and well sustained, the humor laughable, the loose rhyme suited to the subject chosen. In 1562 Queen Elizabeth was entertained by the presentation of the first English tragedy, a play entitled *Gorboduc*, by Thomas Sackville.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, amateur dramatic productions called *masques* were presented. Sometimes even nobles and members of the royal family took part. These plays were accompanied by music, dancing, and spectacular effects. The literary character of the masque developed into the compositions of Ben Jonson, and culminated in Milton's *Comus*. During the reign of Elizabeth the productions of Kyd, Peele, Greene, Marlowe, and Beaumont and Fletcher raised the drama to such a lofty plane that only the genius of a Shakespeare could surmount it.

There are two distinct classes of modern dramas, tragedies and comedies. In the former, events crowd irresistibly on to some terrible conclusion, usually resulting in the death of the principal characters. An atmosphere of gloom sur-

## **The English Drama**

rounds it, and the flashes of light serve but to intensify the general darkness. Even when the soul of the reader recognizes the justice of the end it rebels against the horrors of the situation. The deeper and darker passions predominate; love is swallowed up in hate and happiness drowned in grief. The comedy is in a lighter and happier vein; its situations may be trying but they end happily; the sun shines and the air is clear: if storms appear they are the showers of a summer day, not awful tempests. The comedy descends through various forms to the travesty and farce whose purpose is solely to excite laughter by ludicrous scenes and absurd incidents. The melodrama abounds in thrilling situations and extravagant efforts to excite emotions but its final outcome is a happy one, and the villain is punished and virtue is comfortably rewarded.

Dramas may be written in prose or in poetic form. The tendency is toward prose in comedy and poetry in tragedy though in the same play both prose and poetry are sometimes used. The most common form for the poetic composition is the unrhymed iambic pentameter or blank verse (heroic measure). Rhymes are in use but usually their purpose is definite and specific and they may occur occasionally in plays which are otherwise in blank verse. Lyrics are often introduced and in them both rhyme and meter are varied at the pleasure of the author.

## **The English Drama**

No other form of poetry repays the intelligent reader so richly for the time he gives it as does the dramatic, and our literature has its highest development in its immortal dramas.



## **Studies in Macbeth**



## The Plot and the Function of the Scenes

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*Macbeth* is divided into five acts each marking a distinct step in the development of the plot. This is in accord with the usual plan, especially in the tragedy. Freytag in his *Technique of the Drama* says:

“In the modern drama, in general, each act includes one of the five parts of the older drama; the first contains the introduction; the second, the rising action; the third, the climax; the fourth, the return; the fifth, the catastrophe. But the necessity of constructing the great parts of the piece in the same fashion as to external contour, renders it impossible that the single acts should correspond entirely to the five great divisions of the action. Of the rising action, the first stage was usually in the first act, the last sometimes in the third; of the falling action, the beginning and the end were sometimes taken in the third and fifth acts, and combined with the other component parts of these acts into a whole. Naturally Shakespeare has already as a rule made his divisions in this manner.”



## Studies in *Macbeth*

The five acts of this play are as follows :

ACT I. *The Introduction.* Macbeth plans the murder.

ACT II. *The Rising Action.* Duncan's murder.

ACT III. *The Climax.* Banquo's murder and the terror of Macbeth.

ACT IV. *The Return or Falling Action.* Macbeth's fancied security threatened.

ACT V. *The Catastrophe.* The downfall of Macbeth.

Each act is divided into scenes, the events of which occur at one time and at one place, each being an integral part of the play. The purpose of the scene may usually be recognized; though sometimes it is difficult to see why Shakespeare introduced as he did certain of them.

To get a clear idea of the construction of the play, and the general course of its action, make for each act an outline in form like this model for Act I.

## Structure

### ACT I. THE INTRODUCTION

Macbeth plans the murder of Duncan in order that he may secure the throne for himself.

SCENE I. *A Desert Place.* The witches plan to meet Macbeth.

SCENE II. *Camp near Forres.* The story of Macbeth's deeds prepares the way for his appearance.

SCENE III. *A Heath.* The witches meet Macbeth and prophesy his advancement.

SCENE IV. *Forres. The Palace.* Macbeth meets the king and part of the prophecy is fulfilled.

SCENE V. *Inverness. A Room in Macbeth's Castle.* The letter. Lady Macbeth decides to murder Duncan. Macbeth returns home.

SCENE VI. *Before Macbeth's Castle.* The king's arrival.

SCENE VII. *Macbeth's Castle.* The murder planned by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Carry the outline through the five acts and preserve it in neat form so that it can be used for ready reference as the study is continued.

In the first act it is evident that the first scene is intended to prepare the way for the dark and terrible tragedy which is to follow. It gives the keynote of the play. Mysterious agencies are at

## Studies in Macbeth

work. Macbeth, of whom we know nothing, is to meet with supernatural beings whose designs upon him are certainly evil. What will they do?

By the second scene we become acquainted with the story of Macbeth, the wonderful general who has with great personal bravery led the Scotch forces to victory. We infer a weak, incompetent but generous king and compare him with the noble thane who far surpasses him in power and popularity. We become anxious to see this wonderful soldier.

In the third scene the witches show enough of their malevolence to make us fear for the future of the popular chieftain who is approaching, and though they prophesy nothing but good to him yet we feel there is evil in the deed somewhere. We are certain of it when Macbeth receives the announcement so seriously and evidently broods over what lies between him and the throne. When notice of the first promotion comes and Banquo warns Macbeth, we realize that we are approaching terrible deeds in which Macbeth will not be guiltless. The purpose of the scene is accomplished.

Scene IV shows us the generosity of the king; but more important than that, the appointment of Malcolm as heir apparent to the throne arouses Macbeth's fear that his ambitions may not be realized.

A new factor is introduced when Lady Mac-

## Structure

beth appears reading the letter. When she makes her first soliloquy we are in full possession of the elements of the tragedy and though the startling disclosures of the depths of her nature strike us with horror we recognize the master hand that will guide Macbeth's vacillating course. Our characters are before us and nothing remains but to bring in the king and plan the details of the murder.

One might question why Duncan should be introduced as he is with comments on the beautiful scene and the birds nesting on the battlements, but a moment's reflection shows how altogether in keeping it is with the character of Duncan, and how gentle thoughts intensify the darkness of the approaching tragedy.

The soliloquy is introduced at the beginning of Scene VII to show a phase of Macbeth's character and to create a sympathy for the king whose death we know is coming. Lady Macbeth confirms our belief in her ambition in her terrible power over Macbeth, and when the act closes we see the characters fully embarked on a resistless stream that bears them on to some awful catastrophe. It is to be a tragedy of souls and cannot end with the murder of the poor king for whom we have no personal regard. Our interest is in Macbeth beset by demons of the air and hounded on by his inhuman wife. Yet we know that had his soul been spotless he could not have

## Studies in *Macbeth*

yielded even to the temptation of the "weird sisters" and the goading of his ambitious wife. So much has the art of Shakespeare done for us in his handling of the first act.

Continue the study on the same lines through the succeeding acts. Take up the scenes one by one and write what you think to be the function of each, show also how well the evident purpose is accomplished. The questions which follow will help to direct your thought, but the answers to all of them will by no means complete the outline referred to.

### QUESTIONS IN DETAIL

ACT II. Scene I. Why are Fleance and Banquo put upon the stage before Macbeth enters? Is it usual in this play for the leading character to enter upon the stage at the beginning of an act? At the opening of a scene? Why should this be so? Are the audience as quiet and attentive at the beginning of a scene as they are a little later? Are they apt to be less quiet and attentive at the beginning of an act than at the beginning of a scene? Why?

Why at this point does Shakespeare cause a diamond to be given by the king to Lady Macbeth? Does the soliloquy of Macbeth prepare you for the terrors he is to suffer when the murders are committed?

## Questions

Scene III. Who were on the stage at the close of the last scene? Who enters next after Macduff and Lennox? Is Macbeth in the same costume he wore when the preceding scene closed? What is the function of that part of the scene in which the drunken porter thinks himself guarding the gates of hell?

Scene IV. Does this scene foreshadow the fact that suspicion may fall upon Macbeth? Does it add at all to the horror of Macbeth's deed? Would the play be injured in any way by its omission?

ACT III. Is this act properly called the climax? Of what is it the climax?

Scene III. Had it occurred to you that the third murderer (known as "First Murderer" in the play) might be Macbeth himself? Was there time for Macbeth to return to the banquet after the murder? Was he late at the banquet? Was he there very long before the murderers arrived? Did Macbeth say anything at the feast that makes you think he might have been present at the murder? Why should a third murderer be introduced? What other reasons can you find for or against the theory?

Scene IV. Was the ghost visible to anyone besides Macbeth? Was it a real presence or a production of Macbeth's heated imagination? Does this scene show that Macbeth's mind is

## Studies in Macbeth

affected? Have you any evidence elsewhere that his imagination was disordered? Do you think Shakespeare intended us to consider Macbeth insane or irresponsible? Did people at that time believe in ghosts and witches? Do you think Shakespeare believed in them? Does the appearance of the ghost detract from the interest you feel in the play? Does the scene show any weakening in Lady Macbeth? Does it prepare in any way for the final catastrophe?

ACT IV. What do you think of the conversation between Lady Macduff and her son in Scene II? How old a boy was he? Why was he introduced into the play?

Scene III is the longest scene in the play. Did your interest continue in this as in the other scenes? Why should so much space be given to the conversation between Malcolm and Macduff? Does the importance of this scene in the movement of the plot justify its length? Why then is it here? This is the longest act in the play; why should it be made so long? Does the action seem to be falling?

ACT V. Were you prepared for the agony Lady Macbeth is evidently suffering? Had you believed remorse possible to her? Does Shakespeare handle the characters of Lady Macbeth and her husband in the same manner? Which could be the more easily understood?

## Structure

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

Which scene prepares us for the desertion of Macbeth's forces? In which scene were you first certain of his downfall?

Did you expect Lady Macbeth to appear on the stage again after the sleep-walking scene? Did she commit suicide? What makes you think so?

Do you lose interest in Macbeth after you feel certain of his downfall? Is Shakespeare able to hold your interest in Macbeth to the final culmination? Did you expect Macbeth to fight to the bitter end? What scene was necessary to make the reader understand the thing that toward the last took away Macbeth's courage? Do the many short scenes in the last act break up the continuity of thought? Do they add to the feeling of rapid action and approaching end?

### FORM AND STRUCTURE

Which is the longest act? Which is the shortest? Which act has most scenes? Which has fewest? Which is the longest scene; the shortest?

What is the prevailing meter of the play? Is prose used in any of the scenes? Why? Find rhyming couplets. Where are they used? Why are they so used? Can you find any speeches that seem to be made for the express purpose of preparing the way for an actor to enter upon the stage or to give him a graceful exit?

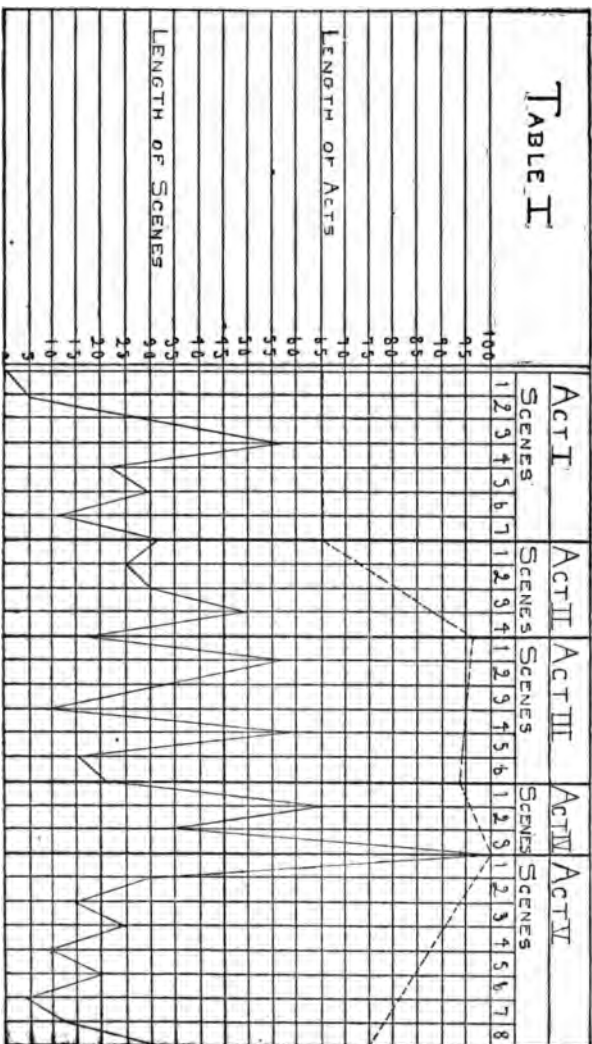


## Graphic Representations

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Table I shows on the percentage basis the relative length of acts and scenes. The longest act is the third and that is 100 per cent. The proportion of the others is easily seen. It is interesting to notice how nearly equal the acts are and how wide the difference in the length of the scenes. Select two or three of the scenes that most impress you and compare them in length with the others. As a general thing are the long scenes the exciting ones? Are the long scenes the most effective? Is there reason why the great scenes should have the length they have? Is it an easy matter for the actor to represent such violent emotions? Is it a strain upon the audience to listen?

# TABLE I.



Draw into Table II a line representing the comparative length of time Macbeth remains upon the stage in each scene. To do this count the lines he speaks in each scene. The highest number in any scene is 100 per cent. The number of lines in any other scene multiplied by 100 and divided by the number of lines in the longest scene gives the per cent. Mark on the dividing line of each scene in the table the per cent of Macbeth's lines and then join these points by straight lines. In scenes where he does not speak, his per cent is of course zero. The line for Lady Macbeth is drawn in Table II. Study the two and make comparisons.

TABLE II  
LENGTH OF  
LADY MACBETH'S SCENES

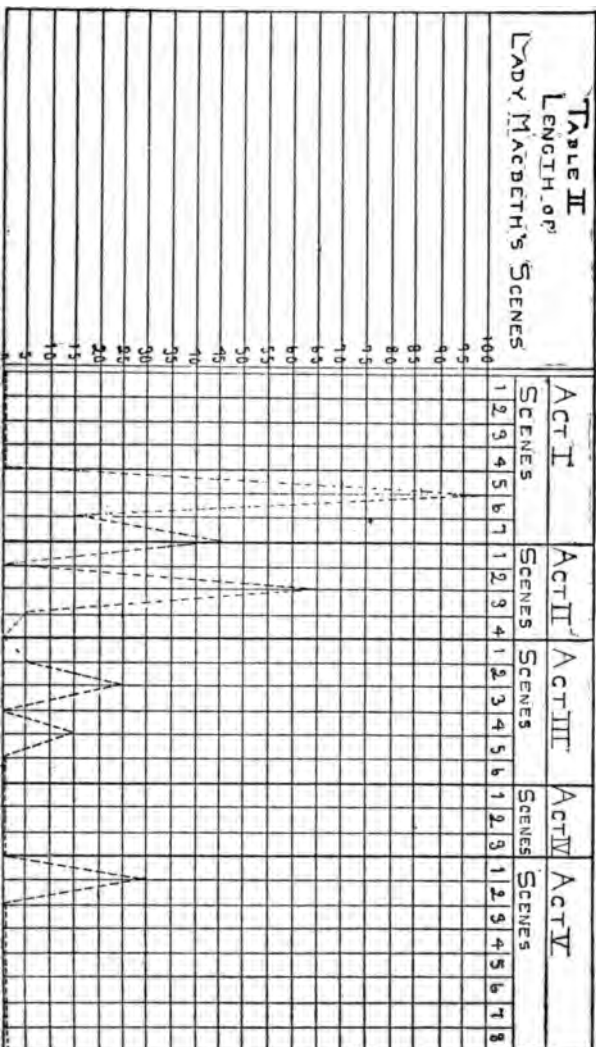


Table III shows in which scenes the characters appear. The witches it will be seen, appear in Act I, Scenes I and III, Act II, Scene V, and Act IV, Scene I. Would the play be seriously affected if Scenes V and VI of Act III were transposed? This would bring the witches in the last scene of the act. Now suppose this witch scene were united to Scene I of Act IV, would the play be seriously affected? Would the new arrangement be an improvement? Why?

Compare the number of scenes in which Lady Macbeth appears, with the number of Macbeth's. Fill out the table for Macduff, Banquo, Duncan, Malcolm, Lady Macduff and son, and such others as you are interested in. The table will then suggest to you a number of interesting comparisons. Does it show you something of the relative importance of the characters? Would you be satisfied to rank the characters solely on this basis? Study these tables asking and answering for yourself questions about the associations of different characters on the stage until you are familiar with them all.

[illegible]

Another interesting view of the play may be given, one that will show graphically the relative intensity of your wavering interests in the drama. Rule a sheet of paper after the form of Table I. Now ascertain in which scene your interest was most strongly held. Let this represent 100 per cent and mark its place on the diagram. Then select the scene that had for you the least interest; that is zero. Now take the scenes one by one, decide on their relative interest to you, and mark each one, accordingly, on the diagram. Connect the marks representing the height of interest in each scene, and you have a line showing how your interest rose and fell in the course of your reading. This tells you at once what power Shakespeare has over you and if you compare the scenes that made the deepest impression upon you with those that were less effective you will be able to determine some of the means by which Shakespeare reached your feelings.

## Stage Setting

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The student should now be familiar with the form and structure of the play, but he is far from having made an appreciative study of its power and beauty. The work may at times have seemed a little tedious, but the final delight in the mastery of the drama will compensate royally for the labor expended.

As a further step toward the higher appreciation which we wish to attain, we should give free rein to our imagination, clothe with appropriate scenery the stage upon which our characters appear and see our actors in suitable costume. The only words we have descriptive of the first scene in Act II are *Court of Macbeth's Castle* and not a word anywhere of the costumes worn by Banquo and Fleance. But we have seen pictures of the strong castles of the Middle Ages and we know something of their structure. No architect will hamper us with rules and no painter offend us with incongruous colors. We may build our castle as we please and make our courtyard suit our fancy.

Our stage shows in the center, at the rear, a great iron gate, strongly reinforced by bolts and crossbars, looking across the paved outer court. Beyond, the rough masonry of the castle walls



## Studies in Macbeth

shuts off any view of the heaths and crags of Scotland. In the middle of the stage is a heavy table, three or four chairs of antique design and massive woodwork standing about it. To the right, several doors lead to the private apartments of Macbeth and his wife. To the left, a bronze lamp swinging over a flight of two steps indicates the entrance to the hallway of the king's suite of rooms. Torches flicker in iron brackets fastened to the stone wall at either side of the entrance.

Banquo enters from the king's apartments, followed by his son. The conspicuous features of the thane's costume are close-fitting brown hose, wrapped from the knee down with narrow bands of buff cloth, a short tunic of neutral color, gathered in at the waist by a belt from which hangs the heavy-sheathed sword and a dagger, and a Scotch cap with projecting feather. Fleance has on similar garments though simpler than his father's. Macbeth strides in from the right, garbed in much the same fashion with a dagger for his only weapon. His head is bare and his long hair flows over his shoulders. A heavy black mustache hangs below his chin giving a fierce expression to his countenance. His tunic is open at the throat exposing a massive, bull-like neck.

When Banquo and Fleance have left him, Macbeth seats himself at the table and in horror-stricken tones, begins his soliloquy on the blood-stained dagger. The cold night-wind howls

## Stage Setting

dismally about the battlements and through the gloomy corridors of the great castle. Low muttering thunder and an occasional distant lightning flash add to his excitement. As he continues, his horror increases; the shrieking wind, the darkening court, his own murderous thoughts, affright him. The bell rings, he starts up :

“I go, and it is done, the bell invites me,  
Hear it not Duncan, for it is a knell  
That summons thee to heaven — or to hell.”

He dashes with drawn dagger toward the king's apartments. A vivid flash of lightning seemingly in his very face, and a roar of warning thunder, send him staggering back across the flagged pavement of the courtyard. Again he advances; another flash and roar. Now, thoroughly alarmed, but with courage surely “screwed up to the sticking place,” he makes a third rush and disappears down the black corridor amid a final overwhelming crash of thunder and roar of howling storm.

All is still save the moaning wind, whistling through the vacant court. A shriek, a long quivering moan, rises above the wind. The deed is done.

This description follows somewhat closely a recent representation of the great play. Take the banquet scene and write an account of that as you see it. In what kind of room is the banquet held? How are the tables arranged? How are

### **Studies in Macbeth**

the guests dressed? What does Macbeth wear? Describe the queen's costume. Where is the queen's seat? Where does the king sit? Describe the action of the king and Lady Macbeth through the whole scene. Take one of the scenes in which the witches appear and describe to yourself the scene and the actions of the players. Think through other scenes in the same way.

## Character Study

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It is in the study of character and its development that the drama yields to us its richest reward. *Macbeth* is an excellent play with which to begin because the characters are drawn with such bold strokes, are on such a grand scale, that although we sometimes stand appalled at the depths revealed to us and are struck dumb by the solemn grandeur of the march of events, we are not often left in doubt of the author's purpose or confused by irrelevant details. There are no subtle analyses, no minute dissections of passion or of will, but each emotion is as vivid and as forceful in its play as human power can make it. The gloomy shades are rarely lifted, but flashes of light photograph upon our minds clear-cut impressions that never can be blurred. It is a play to be read as well as a play to be seen, and the full measure of the awful tragedy can never be taken but in the quiet of one's own soul, undisturbed by scenic display or the murmur of trembling spectators. At his leisure the student can take from their places the people one by one and hold them before him till their most obscure characteristics are clearly defined.

## Lady Macbeth

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Though we hear much of Macbeth and have seen him with the witches and the king, it is not till near the close of the fourth scene in the first act that we learn that he is married. Then he says to Duncan:

“I'll be myself the harbinger and make joyful  
The hearing of my wife with your approach.”

This is the only introduction given to the character who stands second only to Macbeth. The very next scene opens in a room of Macbeth's castle and Lady Macbeth enters reading aloud from a letter. “They met me in the day of success: and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge.” We recognize at once the writer, and feel the power the prediction of the witches is to be in shaping his destiny. But who or what is the woman who reads? Macbeth has written no more than the facts. “My dearest partner of greatness” tells us nothing more than the most ordinary message a husband might send under such remarkable circumstances. And of the lady we know nothing.

But she speaks:

## Lady Macbeth

“Glamis thou art and Cawdor, and shalt be  
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy  
nature;  
It is too full o’ the milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way.”

Such a revelation is startling. He *shall* be king. She *fears* the nature of this valiant soldier. A Macbeth “too full o’ the milk of human kindness”? What a woman is this “dearest partner” of his greatness! What is meant by “the nearest way”? What thoughts must be brooding under that darkened brow! Only two sentences have been uttered but the keynote of her character has been sounded. Her husband *shall* be king and by the *nearest* way. She has ambition for her husband and is unscrupulous as to the means she will use in accomplishing it. She regards her husband as too noble and too timid to do what must be done if he would have the crown, but wishes him to come to her at once that she may pour her spirit into his ear.

She is ambitious and, we feel, would not hesitate to stoop to murder if necessary, but we are unprepared for the blasphemous utterances which follow the announcement of the king’s approach. No blacker depths exist in human nature than those into which we peer. We know that the reckless woman will stop at nothing, yet there is in her words a hint that she distrusts her own nature, feels some physical drawing back

## Studies in Macbeth

from the terrible course she is entering upon, some "compunctious visitings" which may cause her to tremble and even to hesitate.

When she meets Macbeth there is no waste of time in idle compliments but every word is direct and to the purpose. "And when goes hence"? "Ah, Macbeth, I read your face like a book. I know your wishes but others may read them. Bear welcome in your eye." She is not only heartless but wise and cunning. If the dark deed is to be done, she alone is competent to do it. She assumes it all. "Leave all the rest to me." The short scene is ended. In all there were but seventy lines, of which Lady Macbeth has spoken fifty-three. Yet it is her longest scene and the one in which Shakespeare has made her reveal her character in its most startling colors.

In the next scene she enters as the gracious hostess, quite at home in her lordly castle, competent to receive her kingly guest. Grace and dignity blend in her words and manner. We marvel at the power of concealment that rests in the woman's soul. Murderess, fiend she may be, but she is an intellectual woman, refined in manner and by birth a lady.

The woman's instincts are not dead in her, she still knows "how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks her," but she uses that feeling as the most forcible comparison she can conjure up with which to bring back the resolution of her husband

## **Lady Macbeth**

who now hesitates to perform the deed he himself suggested. In this act however she does not stop with encouragement. She will so "convince" the warders of the king that with wine and wassail their very brains shall fume. She will actually join with her husband in the perpetration of this diabolical deed on the unguarded Duncan.

When Lady Macbeth enters in the second scene of the second act she says:

"That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;

What hath quenched them hath given me fire."

This gives us the first intimation of a courage that was not quite sufficient for the tremendous strain she was placing upon it, and that she had had recourse to drink. What struggles her woman's nature was making against the o'ermastering power of her ambition, we can only conjecture, but we feel that it is not possible for a human being to do such violence to every humane impulse without making way for an awful retribution. How long can a person, not altogether savage, harbor such thoughts and plan such inhuman deeds? And she is not a monster, for she says:

"Had he not resembled  
My father as he slept, I had done't."

"These deeds must not be thought  
After these ways; so, it will make us mad."



## Studies in Macbeth

The momentary twinges of an unheeded conscience soon pass away and her hideous courage returns to bolster up the more sensitive spirit of her despicable husband :

“My hands are of your color; but I shame  
To wear a heart so white.”—

“A little water clears us of this deed;  
How easy it is then.”

Few readers will think that when Lady Macbeth calls out for help and faints at the description of the murder she is more than feigning. Whether she does this to divert attention from Macbeth who seems to be overdoing his part in his description of the slaughter of the grooms, or to show to the horrified listeners her own deep concern that the trusting king should have been murdered, is not certain and it is of course possible that when for the first time she faces the event publicly her strength is insufficient and she swoons. In view of her final scene, which seems the more probable?

Although Lady Macbeth's ambition seems to be for her husband and her interest more that he should wear the crown than that she should be queen, we have seen no sign of a personal affection for him. He has spoken of his love for her but she has loaded him with reproaches for his cowardice. She never blames him for his evil deeds and assumes from the start her equal share of responsibility for the crimes.

## **Lady Macbeth**

As the way grows longer and darker crimes foreshadow themselves, she shows more sternly her interest in him despite her own growing melancholy.

“Nought’s had, all’s spent  
Where our desire is got without content:  
’Tis safer to be that which we destroy  
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.”

She is saying this, but the moment Macbeth appears she rallies her fortitude and bravely takes her place beside him, if not affectionate, at least his consort; if no longer ferocious in her ambitious career, at least serene in her disappointment.

The murder of Banquo is Macbeth’s plan and deed although Lady Macbeth is privy to it. The wife comprehends his words and stands ready to sympathize with him, to support him:

“Things without all remedy  
Should be without regard. What’s done is done.”

Her own unhappiness, the terrors that follow her into the night, have curbed the fiery spirit that loaded him with stinging invective and now she seeks to share his burdens and that without reproaching him for his weakness. She knows herself the terrible stings of remorse. She has all the terror that the constant fear of detection brings to her for she sees the weakness and lack of self-control her husband manifests whenever faced by danger.

## Studies in *Macbeth*

Then comes the banquet scene where in that crowd of critical and suspicious nobles she must see her husband give way and confess by his trembling terror the deep measure of his guilt. She is once more equal to the occasion and, although distracted by fear and trembling with the horrors of her remorse, she carries him through. She has reached the limit of human endurance and though we have no idea how retribution will reach her nor how she will manifest her weakness yet we know that soon she will give way.

Mrs. Siddons, the greatest Lady Macbeth the stage has ever known, gives her impressions of the last scene as follows :

“Behold her now, with wasted form, with wan and haggard countenance, her starry eyes glazed with the ever-burning fever of remorse, and on their lids the shadows of death. Her ever-restless spirit wanders in troubled dreams about her dismal apartment; and, whether waking or asleep, the smell of innocent blood incessantly haunts her imagination:

‘Here’s the smell of blood still,  
All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten  
This little hand.’

“During this appalling scene, which, to my sense, is the most so of them all, the wretched creature, in imagination, acts over again the accumulated horrors of her whole conduct.

### **Lady Macbeth**

These dreadful images, accompanied with the agitations they have induced, have obviously accelerated her untimely end; for, in a few moments, tidings of her death are brought to her unhappy husband. It is conjectured that she died by her own hand. Too certain it is, that she dies and makes no sign. . . . Macbeth (I must think pusillanimously, when I compare his conduct with her forbearance) has been continually pouring out his miseries to his wife. His heart has therefore been eased, from time to time, by unloading his weight of woe; while she, on the contrary, has perseveringly endured in silence the utmost anguish of a wounded spirit. Her feminine nature, her delicate structure, it is too evident, are soon overwhelmed by the enormous pressure of her crimes. Yet it will be granted that she gives proof of a naturally higher toned mind than that of Macbeth. The different physical powers of the two sexes are finely delineated, in the different effects which their mutual crimes produce. Her frailer frame, and keener feelings, have now sunk under the struggle, his robust and less sensitive constitution has not only resisted it, but bears him on to deeper wickedness, and to experience the fatal fecundity of crime. . . .”

Writers of Shakespeare have given much space to this wonderful character, and here are a few brief extracts from their discriminating comments:

“Shakespeare has supported the character of

## Studies in Macbeth

Lady Macbeth by repeated efforts, and never omits an opportunity of adding a trait of ferocity or a mark of the want of human feelings, to this monster of his own creation. The softer passions are more obliterated in her than in her husband, in proportion as her ambition is greater." — *Steevens*.

"Lady Macbeth, like all in Shakespeare, is a class individualized: — of high rank, left much alone, and feeding herself with day dreams of ambition, she mistakes the courage of fantasy for the power of bearing the consequences of the realities of guilt. Hers is the mock fortitude of a mind deluded by ambition; she shames her husband with a superhuman audacity of fancy which she cannot support, but sinks in the season of remorse, and dies in suicidal agony." — *Coleridge*.

"In this astonishing creature one sees a woman in whose bosom the passion of ambition has almost obliterated all the characteristics of human nature, in whose composition are associated all the subjugating powers of intellect and all the charms and graces of personal beauty." — *Mrs. Siddons*.

"Lady Macbeth is not thoroughly hateful, for she is not a virago, not an adulteress, not impelled by revenge. On the contrary she expresses no feeling of personal malignity toward any human being in the whole course of her part. Shakespeare could have easily displayed her crimes in

## **Lady Macbeth**

a more commonplace and accountable light by assigning some feudal grudge as a mixed motive of her cruelty to Duncan; but he makes her a murderess in cold blood, and from the sole motive of ambition, well knowing that if he had broken up the inhuman serenity of her remorselessness by the ruffling of anger, he would have vulgarized the features of the splendid Titaness.

“By this entire absence of petty vice and personal virulence, and by concentrating all the springs of her conduct into the one determined feeling of ambition, the mighty poet has given her character a statue-like simplicity which, though cold, is spirit stirring from the wonder it excites, and which is imposing, although its respectability consists, as far as the heart is concerned, in merely negative decencies. How many villains walk the world in credit to their graves, from the mere fulfillment of these negative decencies! Had Lady Macbeth been able to smother her husband’s babblings, she might have been one of them.

“Shakespeare makes her a great character by calming down all the pettiness of vice, and by giving her only one ruling passion which, though criminal, has at least a lofty object, corresponding with the firmness of her will and the force of her intellect. The object of her ambition was a crown which, in the days in which we suppose her to have lived, was a miniature symbol of divinity.

## Studies in Macbeth

Under the full impression of her intellectual powers, and with a certain allowance which we make for the illusion of sorcery, the imagination suggests to us something like a half apology for her ambition."— *Campbell*.

"What was Lady Macbeth's form and temperament? In Maclise's great painting of the banquet scene, she is represented as a woman of large and coarse development; a Scandinavian Amazon, the muscles of whose brawny arms could only have been developed to their great size by hard and frequent use; a woman of whose fists her husband might well be afraid. . . . Was Lady Macbeth such a being? Did the fierce fire of her soul animate the epicene bulk of a virago? Never! Lady Macbeth was a lady, beautiful and delicate, whose one vivid passion proves that her organization was instinct with nerve force, unoppressed by weight of flesh. Probably she was small; for it is the smaller sort of women whose emotional force is the most fierce, and she herself bears unconscious testimony to the fact that her hand was little."— *Bucknill*.

In this connection Mrs. Siddons's account of her first appearance in the character will be interesting:

"It was my custom to study my characters at night, when all the domestic cares and business of the day were over. On the night preceding that in which I was to appear in this part for the first

## **Lady Macbeth**

time, I shut myself up, as usual, when all the family were retired, and commenced my study of Lady Macbeth. As the character was very short, I thought I should soon accomplish it. Being then only twenty years of age, I believed, as many others do believe, that little more was necessary than to get the words into my head; for the necessity of discrimination, and the development of character, at that time of my life, had scarcely entered into my imagination. But, to proceed. I went on with tolerable composure, in the silence of the night (a night I can never forget), till I came to the assassination scene, when the horrors of the scene rose to a degree that made it impossible for me to get farther. I snatched up my candle, and hurried out of the room, in a paroxysm of terror. My dress was of silk, and the rustling of it, as I ascended the stairs to go to bed, seemed to my panic-struck fancy like the movement of a specter pursuing me. At last I reached my chamber, where I found my husband fast asleep. I clapped my candlestick down upon the table, without the power to put the candle out and threw myself upon my bed, without daring even to take off my clothes. At peep of day I rose to resume my task; but so little did I know of my part when I appeared in it, at night, that my shame and confusion cured me of procrastinating my business, for the remainder of my life."



# Studies in Macbeth

"About six years afterward I was called upon to act the same character in London. By this time I had perceived the difficulties of assuming a personage with whom no one feeling of common general nature was congenial or assistant. One's own heart could prompt one to express, with some degree of truth, the sentiments of a mother, a daughter, a wife, a lover, a sister, etc., but to adopt this character must be an effort of the judgment alone.

"Therefore, it was with the utmost diffidence, nay, terror, that I undertook it, and with the additional fear of Mrs. Pritchard's reputation in it before my eyes. The dreaded first night at length arrived, when, just as I had finished my toilet, and was pondering with fearfulness my first appearance in the grand fiendish part, comes Mr. Sheridan, knocking at my door, and insisting, in spite of all my entreaties not to be interrupted at this to me tremendous moment, to be admitted. He would not be denied admittance, for he protested he must speak to me on a circumstance which so deeply concerned my own interest, that it was of the most serious nature. Well, after much squabbling, I was compelled to admit him, that I might dismiss him the sooner, and compose myself before the play began. But, what was my distress and astonishment when I found that he wanted me, even at this moment of anxiety and terror, to adopt another mode of acting the sleep-

### **Lady Macbeth**

ing scene. He told me he had heard with the greatest surprise and concern that I meant to act it without holding the candle in my hand; and, when I urged the impracticability of washing out that damned spot with the vehemence that was certainly implied by both her own words and by those of her gentlewoman, that if I did put the candle out of my hand, it would be thought a presumptuous innovation, as Mrs. Pritchard had always retained it in hers. My mind, however, was made up, and it was then too late to make me alter it; for I was too agitated to adopt another method. My deference for Mr. Sheridan's taste and judgment was, however, so great, that had he proposed the alteration while it was possible for me to change my own plan, I should have yielded to his suggestion; though even then it would have been against my own opinion, and my observation of the accuracy with which somnambulists perform all the acts of waking persons. The scene was, of course, acted as I had myself conceived it, and the innovation, as Mr. Sheridan called it, was received with approbation. Mr. Sheridan himself came to me, after the play, and most ingenuously congratulated me on my obstinacy. When he was gone out of the room I began to undress; and while standing before my glass, and taking off my mantle, a diverting circumstance occurred to chase away the feelings of this anxious night; for while I was repeating and

### Studies in *Macbeth*

endeavoring to call to mind the appropriate tone and action to the words: *Here's the small spot of blood still!* my dresser innocently exclaimed, 'Dear me, ma'am, how very hysterical you are to-night; I protest and vow, ma'am, it was not blood, but rose-pink and water; for I saw the property-man mix it up with my own eyes.'"

## Macbeth

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The character of Macbeth is even more interesting in its development. In what scene does he first appear? What do you know of him when he enters upon the stage? Why should the prophecy be to him a suggestion that causes "horrible imaginings"? Does he think of murder now? Had he thought of it before? Was there anything in the witches' prophecy to indicate that he was to reach his advancement by foul means? At what decision does he arrive in this scene?

In the fourth scene of the first act what traits of character do we recognize in Macbeth? Is the decision he made in the preceding scene changed in this?

Does the first conversation between Lady Macbeth and her husband indicate any previous understanding between them? Had they ever talked over the possibility of Macbeth's becoming king? Had they ever plotted to remove Duncan? Would it be possible for two people to so quickly agree in so vile a plan if they had not previously plotted?

At the end of the first act which character seems to you the worse? Would Macbeth have committed the murder if left alone? Would he have done it without the prophecy of the witches? Should more of the responsibility of the deed rest

### **Studies in Macbeth**

with Lady Macbeth than with Macbeth? Compare Macbeth and Banquo as they appear at the end of the first act. Compare Macbeth and Duncan.

These questions and the sketch of the character of Lady Macbeth show the method that should be followed in character study throughout the play. Other characters should be taken up in the same general manner until each of the important ones stands out a distinct personality, as do our intimate acquaintances and friends. The material for such knowledge is in the play and careful study will bring it out. One should not be hasty in his conclusions but should weigh the evidence for and against every person before determining in what estimation he should be held.

## Subjects for Essays

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General papers should be written on several of the characters and on such other topics as the following:

Macbeth's Religious Belief.

Macduff's Abandonment of his Family.

Polite Speeches in *Macbeth*.

Conscience as a Factor in the Play.

The Importance of the Witches.

How Macbeth's Crimes affected his Social Relations.

In doing this, read the play carefully and collect all the material relating to your topic, arrange it logically, consider it thoughtfully, and then write your conclusions in your own language, quoting whenever necessary to establish your inferences.

## Lessons of the Play

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When the student has mastered his characters, and noticed their inter-relations in all the complex scenes in which they have been placed, when he has viewed the play in part and in the whole, from the many points of view that have been suggested, he is ready to formulate the lessons this drama has for him.

Lust for power leads Macbeth to the commission of frightful crimes and his outraged conscience plies him with its terrible stings. We are prone to admire the bravery of his will, which leads him to fight to the last, but nowhere are we tempted to lighten our detestation of his villainy. The danger of ambition is vividly portrayed, and we learn that repentance cannot lessen the penalty nor rescue the innocent sufferers, that are dragged into the whirl of misguided passions. The tremendous power for evil that resides in one man is so shown that the reader shudders at the possibility, while the retribution is so awful that he must be hardened indeed who would not heed the warning.

Others have seen the tragedy in the same light. Morley sums up the several acts in this lucid way:

“Thus the five acts are arranged with a clear poetical design in their succession: (1) the

### Lessons of the Play

temptation ; (2) the murder of Duncan ; (3) downward, as a consequence of that, to the murder of Banquo ; (4) complete ruin, in passage to the murder of Lady Macduff and her children ; and then, (5) in the last act, the reaping of the whirlwind."

Here are a few other quotations:

"Repentance immediately follows, nay, even precedes the deed, and the stings of conscience leave him rest neither day nor night. But he is now fairly entangled in the snares of hell; truly frightful it is to behold that same Macbeth, who once as a warrior could spurn at death, now that he dreads the prospect of the life to come, clinging with growing anxiety to his earthly existence the more miserable it becomes, and pitilessly removing out of the way whatever to his dark and suspicious mind seems to threaten danger. However much we may abhor his actions, we cannot altogether refuse to compassionate the state of his mind; we lament the ruin of so many noble qualities, and even in his last defense we are compelled to admire the struggle of a brave will with a cowardly conscience. . . . The poet wishes to show that the conflict of good and evil in this world can only take place by the permission of Providence, which converts the curse that individual mortals draw down on their heads into a blessing to others."—*Schlegel*.

"The tyranny of Macbeth plunges a whole



## Studies in *Macbeth*

people into misery, and his crimes have set two great nations in hostility against each other. There could not be a more pregnant and impressive illustration of the solemn truth that the evil influence of crime, like a poisonous serpent coiled within the fairest flowers, spreads over the whole circle of human existence, not only working the doom of the criminal himself, but scattering far and wide the seed of destruction. . . . *Macbeth* is the tragedy in which, above all others, Shakespeare has distinctly maintained his own Christian sentiments and a truly Christian view of the system of things."— *Ulrici*.

"It is as a moralist that Shakespeare excels; no one can doubt this after a careful study of his works which, though containing some passages of questionable taste, cannot fail to elevate the mind by the purity of the morals they inculcate. There breathes through them so strong a belief in virtue, so steady an adherence to good principles, united to such a vigorous tone of honor, as testifies to the author's excellence as a moralist, nay, as a Christian. It is most noteworthy that the tragic paganism of the modern drama disappeared with Shakespeare and that if his plays are criminal in their issues, their logic is invariably and inflexibly orthodox. . . .

Such is *Macbeth*. It is crime! It is remorse! It is the weakness of a strong man opposed to the seductions of a perverted and passionate woman!

## Lessons of the Play

Above all, it is the immediate expiation of crime by the secret vengeance of God! Herein lies the invincible morality of Shakespeare. The poet is in harmony with God."—*Lamartine*.

From Hudson's *Macbeth* (1879) the following paragraph is taken as a most apt characterization of the style in which the drama is composed:

"The style of this mighty drama is pitched in the same high tragic key as the action. Throughout, we have an explosion, as of purpose into act, so also of thought into speech, both literally kindling with their own swiftmess. No sooner thought than said, no sooner said than done, is the law of the piece. Therewithal thoughts and images come crowding and jostling each other in such quick succession, as to prevent a full utterance; a second leaping upon the tongue before the first is fairly off. I should say the poet here specially endeavored how much of the meaning could be conveyed in how little of expression; with the least touching of the ear to send vibrations through all the chambers of the mind. Hence the large, manifold suggestiveness which lurks in the words; they seem instinct with something which the speakers cannot stay to unfold. And between these invitations to linger and the continual drawings onward, the reader's mind is kindled to an almost preternatural activity. All which might at length grow wearisome but that the play is, moreover, throughout, a conflict of

## Studies in *Macbeth*

antagonistic elements and opposite extremes, which are so managed as to brace up the interest on every side: so that the effect of the whole is to refresh, not exhaust the powers; the mind being sustained in its long and lofty flight by the wings that grow forth as of their own accord from its superadded life. The lyrical element, instead of being interspersed here and there in the form of musical lulls and pauses, is thoroughly interfused with the dramatic; while the ethical sense underlies them both, and is forced up through them by their own pressure. The whole drama indeed may be described as a tempest set to music."

Hazlitt in 1817 wrote:

"*Macbeth* generally speaking is done upon a stronger and more systematic principle of contrast than any other of Shakespeare's plays. It moves upon the verge of an abyss and is a constant struggle between life and death. The action is desperate and the reaction is dreadful. It is a huddling together of fierce extremes, a war of opposite natures—which of them shall destroy the other. There is nothing but what has a violent end or violent beginnings. The lights and shades are laid on with a determined hand; the transitions from triumph to despair, from the height of terror to the repose of death, are sudden and startling; every passion brings in its fellow-contrary, and the thoughts pitch and jostle against each other as in the dark. The whole play is

### Lessons of the Play

unruly, a chaos of strange and forbidden things, where the ground rocks under our feet. Shakespeare's genius here took its full swing, and trod upon the farthest bounds of nature and passion. This circumstance will account for the abruptness and violent antithesis of the style, the throes and labor which run through the expression, and from defects will turn them into beauties. 'So fair and foul a day,' etc. 'Such welcome and unwelcome news together.' 'Men's lives are like the flowers in their caps, dying or ere they sicken.' 'Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it.' The scene before the castle gate follows the appearance of the witches on the heath, and is followed by a midnight murder. Duncan is cut off betimes by treason leagued with witchcraft, and Macduff is ripped untimely from his mother's womb to avenge his death. Macbeth, after the death of Banquo, wishes for his presence in extravagant terms, 'To all, and him, we thirst,' and when his ghost appears, cries out, 'Avaunt and quit my sight,' and being gone he is 'himself again.' . . . In Lady Macbeth's speech 'Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done't,' there is murder and filial piety together, and in urging him to fulfill his vengeance against the defenceless king, her thoughts spare the blood of neither infants nor old age."

## **Literary Qualities**

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As yet we have given very little attention to the purely literary qualities of this drama, leaving it to be inferred that whatever could thrill its readers, and so vividly picture the very souls of men and women must be in the highest degree excellent. To us the meaning is sometimes obscure but this is usually owing to the changes that words have undergone since the time when Shakespeare wrote, or to the use of technical or local words whose peculiar significance is now a matter of conjecture. But it is unfair to the great tragedy to leave it without more than a distant allusion to the power and beauty of its language.

Wherever the intensity of the scenes demands it the language rises in sublimity to equal the thought. Some of these passages occur to us, passages in which the expressions are so powerful as to seem extravagant were not the stress of the scenes their justification. Such are these:

“As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air  
With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed.”

“This my hand will rather  
The multitudinous scenes incarnadine  
Making the green one red.”

“Come, thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell.”

## Literary Qualities

“his virtues  
Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against  
The deep damnation of his taking off.”

Whose are the words quoted and under what circumstances were they uttered? Does the language seem to you too strong for the occasion? Find other examples of powerful phrases.

There are many other expressions which though less vigorous are apt in figure or happy in the special use of words. Of this group are the following:

“Ere the bat hath flown,  
His cloistered flight.”

“I’ll drain him dry as hay.”

“After life’s fitful fever he sleeps well.”

“There’s husbandry in heaven;  
Their candles are all out.”

These felicitous expressions give beauty to Shakespeare’s writings and the search for them is fascinating. What others can you find? Locate in their context, the ones given.

Besides these which we admire because of the aptness of the words used there are many others in which a beautiful thought impresses itself vividly upon us. It may not be a new idea but it is so perfectly stated that we see it more clearly and accept it more quickly than in its old form.

### **Studies in Macbeth**

These quotable sentences are very numerous in the play and the student should, after locating them, commit them to memory, together with many other equally fine ones which he selects for himself.

“ Nought’s had, all’s spent,  
Where our desire is got without content.”

“ God’s benison go with you, and with those  
That would make good of bad and friends of  
foes ! ”

“ To show an unfelt sorrow is an office  
Which the false man does easy.”

“ The labor we delight in physics pain.”

“ the innocent sleep,  
Sleep that knits up the ravell’d sleave of care,  
The death of each day’s life, sore labor’s bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great natures’ second course,  
Chief nourisher in life’s feast.”

Then there are moral reflections that convey to us food for deep thought and long reflection.

“ And oftentimes to win us to our harm,  
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,  
Win us with honest trifles, to betray’s  
In deep consequence.”

Can you find more utterances of this philosophical type ?

## Source of the Plot

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Shakespeare undoubtedly derived his tragedy of *Macbeth* from Holinshed's Chronicle (1579) and it is claimed that Holinshed is indebted to Hector Boyce who printed at Paris in 1526 a work called *Scotorum Historia*. All the facts or so-called facts are at best traditions and legends of the Scottish people. But the real history so far as it is known was much altered in the play. There was no rebellion of Macdonwald nor did Sweno invade Fife during the reign of Duncan. Duncan marched north to put down the rebellion of Torfin and was murdered many miles from Inverness in 1039. Macbeth's father was not Sinel. He was prince of Ross, not thane of Glamis, and was slain by the grandfather of Duncan, who also slew Lady Macbeth's grandfather and burned her husband and fifty of his clan. She escaped and fled with her infant son into the county of Ross and married Macbeth, then the governor. In 1054 Siward, his son Osbert, and their Northumbrians, fought a desperate battle with Macbeth near Dunsinnan. Macbeth was defeated and fled north but was not slain by Macduff until two years later. These facts show the chief departures from historical truth. But for the purposes of this drama the truth of its incidents is of little importance.



## Studies in Macbeth

The quaint account of Holinshed is a charming narrative from which we cannot refrain from quoting to show what interested Shakespeare and how he handled his materials. Some of the details of Duncan's murder are transferred from Holinshed's account of the murder of King Duffe, the great grandfather of Lady Macbeth:

“At length, hauing talked with them for a long time, he got him into his priue chamber, onelie with two of his chamberleins, who hauing brought him to bed, came foorth againe, and then fall to banketting with Donwald and his wife, who had prepared diuerse delicate dishes, and sundrie sorts of drinks for their reare supper or collation, whereat they sate vp so long, till they had charged their stamachs with such full gorges, that their heads were no sooner got to the pillow, but asleepe they were so fast, that a man might haue remooued the chamber ouer them, sooner than haue awaked them out of their droonken sleepe.

“But in the morning when the noise was raised in the king's chamber how the king was slaine, his bodie conueied awaie, and the bed all beraied with blood; he with the watch ran thither, as though he had knowne nothing of the matter, and breaking into the chamber, and finding cakes of blood in the bed, and on the floore about the sides of it, he foorthwith slue the chamberleins, as guiltie of that heinous murther, and then like a

### Source of the Plot

mad man running to and fro, he ransacked euerie corner within the castell, as though it had beene to haue seene if he might haue found either the bodie, or anie of the murtherers hid in anie priuie place. . . .

“Monstrous sights also that were seene within the Scottish kingdome that yeere were thase, horses in Louthian, being of singular beautie and swiftnesse, did eate theire owne flesh, and would in no wise taste anie other meate.”

Holinshed's account of Macbeth is very long and would be interesting in its entirety but we can give a few extracts only. It must be remembered that these extracts do not make a continuous narrative and that much is omitted which is as closely paralleled as are the passages quoted.

“The other [daughter of Malcolme] called Doda, was married vnto Sinell the thane of Glamis, by whom she had issue one Makbeth a valiant gentleman, and one that if he had not beene somewhat cruell of nature, might haue beene thought most woorthie the gouernment of a realme. On the other part, Duncane was so soft and gentle of nature, that the people wished the inclinations and maners of these two cousins to haue beene so tempered and enterchangeable bestowed betwixt them, that where the one had too much of clemencie, and the other of crueltie, the meane vertue betwixt these two extremities might haue reigned by indifferent partition in

## Studies in Macbeth

them both, so should Duncane haue proued a woorthie king, and Makbeth an excellent capteine. . . .

“He [Makdowald] vsed also such subtile persuasions and forged allurements, that in a small time he had gotten together a mightie power of men: for out of the westerne isles there came vnto him a great multitude of people, offering themselves to assist him in that rebellious quarell, and out of Ireland in hope of the spoile came no small number of Kernes and Galloglasses, offering gladlie to serue vnder him, whither it should please him to lead them. . . .

“Makbeth entring into the castell by the gates, as then set open, found the carcasse of Makdowald lieng there amongst the residue of the slaine bodies, which when he beheld, remitting no peece of his cruell nature with that pitiful sight, he caused the head to be cut off, and set vpon a poles end, and so sent it as a present to the king who as then laie at Bertha. The headlesse trunke he commanded to bee hoong vp vpon an high paire of gallows. . . .

“It fortunied as Makbeth and Banquho iournied toward Fores, where the king then laie, they went sporting by the waie together without other companie, saue onelie themselves, passing thorough the woods and fields, when suddenlie in the midst of a laund, there met them three women in strange and wild apparell, resembling creatures of

### Source of the Plot

elder world, whome when they attentiuely beheld, woondering much at the sight, the first of them spake and said: All haile, Makbeth, thane of Glamis (for he had latelie entered into that dignitie and office by the death of his father Sinell). The second of them said: Haile Makbeth thane of Cawder. But the third said: All haile Makbeth that heereafter shalt be king of Scotland.

“Then Banquo: What manner of women (saith he) are you, that seeme so little fauourable vnto me, whereas to my fellow heere, besides high offices ye assigne, also the kingdome, appointing fourth nothing for me at all? Yes (saith the first of them) we promise greater benefits vnto thee, than vnto him, for he shall reigne indeed, but with an vnluckie end; neither shall he leaue anie issue behind to succeed in his place, where contrarilie thou in deed shall not reigne at all, but of thee those shall be borne which shall gouern the Scottish kingdome by long order of continuall descent. Herewith the foresaid women vanished immediatlie out of their sight. This was reputed at the first but some vaine fantastick illusion by Makbeth and Banquo, insomuch that Banquo would call Makbeth in iest king of Scotland; and Makbeth againe would call him in sport likewise, the father of manie kings. But afterward the common opinion was, that these women were either the weird sisters, that is (as ye wouldsay) the goddesses of destinie, or else some nymphs or

### Studies in Macbeth

feiries, indued with knowledge of prophesie by their necromanticall science, bicause euerie thing came to passe as they had spoken. For shortlie after, the thane of Cawder being condemned at Fores of treason against the king committed; his lands, liuings, and offices were giuen of the king's liberalitie to Makbeth.

“The same night after, at supper, Banquo iested with him and said: Now Makbeth thou hast obtained those things which the two former sisters prophesied, there remaineth onelie for thee to purchase that which the third said should come to passe. Wherevpon Makbeth reuoluing the thing in his mind, began euen then to deuise how he might atteine to the kingdome: but yet he thought with himselfe that he must tarie a time, which should aduance him thereto (by the diuine prouidence) as it had come to passe in his former preferment. But shortlie after it chanced that the king Duncane, hauing two sonnes by his wife which was the daughter of Siward earle of Northumberland, he made the elder of them called Malcolm prince of Cumberland, as it were thereby to appoint him his successor in the kingdome immediatlie after his deceasse. Makbeth sore troubled herewith, for that he saw by this means his hope sore hindered (where, by the old laws of the realme, the ordinance was, that if he that should succeed were not of able age to take charge vpon himselfe, he that was next of bloud vnto him

### Source of the Plot

should be admitted) he began to take counsell how he might vsurpe the kingdome by force, hauing a iust quarrell so to doo (as he took the matter) for that Duncane did what in him lay to defraud him of all maner of title and claime, which he might in time to come, pretent vnto the crowne.

“The woords of the three weird sisters also (of whom before ye haue heard) greatlie encouraged him herevnto, but speciallie his wife lay sore vpon him to attempt the thing, as she that was verie ambitious, burning in vnquenchable desire to beare the name of queene. At length therefore communicating his purposed intent with his trustie friends, *amongst whome Banquo was the chiefest*, vpon confidence of their promised aid, he slue the king at Enuerns, or (as some say) at Botgsuane, in the sixt yeare of his reigne, then hauing a companie about him of such as he had made priuie to his enterprise, he caused himselfe to be proclaimed king, and foorthwith went vnto Scone, where (by common consent) he receiued the inuesture of the kingdome according to the accustomed maner. The bodie of Duncane was first conueied vnto Elgine, and there buried in kinglie wise; but afterward it was remoued and conueied vnto Colmekill, and there laid in a sepulture amongst his predece-sors, in the year after the birth of our Saviour, 1046. . . .

Ye shall vnderstand that after the contriued

### Studies in *Macbeth*

slaughter of Banquo nothing prospered with the foresaid Makbeth: for in maner euerie man began to doubt his owne life, and durst vnneth appeare in the king's presence; and euen as there were manie that stood in feare of him, so likewise stood he in feare of manie, in such sort that he began to make those awaie by one surmised cauillation or other, whome he thought most able to work him anie displeasure.

At length he found such sweetnesse by putting his nobles thus to death, that his earnest thirst after bloud in this behalfe might in no wise be satisfied. . . .

“ Furthur, to the end he might the more cruellie oppresse his subiects with all tyrantlike wrongs, he builded a strong castell on the top of an hie hill called Dunsinane. . . .

“ And suerlie herevpon had he put Makduffe to death, but that a certeine witch, whome hee had in great trust, had told that he should neuer be slain with man borne of anie woman, nor vanquished till the wood of Bernane came to the castell of Dunsinane. By this prophesie Makbeth put all feare out of his heart, supposing he might doo as he would, without anie feare to be punished for the same, for by the one prophesie he beleueed it was vnpossible for anie man to vanquish him, and by the other vnpossible to slea him. This vaine hope caused him to doo manie outrageous things, to the greeuous oppression of his subjects.

### Source of the Plot

At length, Makduffe, to auoid perill of life, purposed with himselfe to passe into England, to procure Malcolme Cammore to claim the crowne of Scotland. But this was not so secretlie deuised by Makduffe, but that Makbeth had knowledge giuen him thereof: for kings (as is said) haue sharpe sight like vnto Lynx, and long ears like vnto Midas. For Makbeth had in euerie noble mans house one slie fellow or other in fee with him, to reueale all that was said or doone within the same, by which slight he oppressed the most part of the nobles of his realme.

“Immediatelie then, being aduertised whereabout Makduffe went, he came hastilie with a great power into Fife, and foorthwith besieged the castell where Makduffe dwelled, trusting to haue found him therein. They that kept the house without anie resistance opened the gates and suffered him to enter, mistrusting none euill. But neuertheless Makbeth most cruellie caused the wife and children of Makduffe, with all other whom he found in that castell, to be slaine. Also he confiscated the goods of Makduffe, proclaimed him traitor, and confined him out of all the parts of his realme; but Makduffe was already escaped out of danger and gotten into England vnto Malcolme Cammore, to trie what purchase hee might make by means of his support to reuenge the slaughter so cruellie executed on his wife, his children and other friends.”



## Studies in Macbeth

The long conversation between Malcolm and Macduff in which the former pretends to be all that is bad in order to test the probity of Macduff is taken almost bodily from the chronicle.

“Malcolme following hastilie after Makbeth, came the night before the battell vnto Birnane wood, and when his army had rested a while there to refresh them, he commanded euerie man to get a bough of some tree or other of that wood in his hand, as big as he might beare, and to march foorth therewith in such wise, that on the next morning they might come closelie and without sight in this manner within viewe of his enimies. On the morrow when Makbeth beheld them comming in this sort, he first maruelled what the matter ment, but in the end remembred himselfe that the prophesie which he heard long before that time, of the coming of Birnane wood to Dunsinane castell, was likewise now to be fulfilled. Neuertheless he brought his men in order of battell, and exhorted them to doo valiantlie, howbeit his enimies had scarcely cast from them their boughs, when Makbeth perceiuing their numbers, betooke him streict to flight, whom Makduffe pursued with great hatred euen till he came vnto Lunfannaine, where Makbeth perceiuing that Makduffe was hard at his backe, leapt beside his horsse, saieng: Thou traitor, what meanith it that thou shouldest thus in vaine follow me that am not appointed to be slaine by anie crea-

### Source of the Plot

ture that is borne of woman, come on therefore, and receiue thy reward which thou has deserued for thy paines, and therewithall he lifted vp his swoord thinking to haue slaine him.

“But Makduffe quicklie auoiding from his horsse, yer he came at him, answered (with his naked swoord in his hand) saieng: It is true Makbeth and now shall thine insatiable crueltie haue an end, for I am euen he that thy wizzards haue told thee of, who was never borne of my mother, but ripped out of her womb; therewithall he stept vnto him, and slue him in the place. Then cutting his head from his shoulders, he set it vpon a pole, and brought it vnto Malcolme.”

These quotations are taken from Holinshed's Chronicle as published in the Furness *Variorum*.



**Comedy**



## Characteristics of the Comedy

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Studies similar to those given in *Macbeth* may be applied to other tragedies and to comedies. It will be found, however, that there are great structural differences between the two types of drama. The comedy is more lawless, and comic effect is produced in ways that are much less formal than those which are necessary to genuine tragedy. The fun of a comedy may lie in situations that are quite independent of the main plot and it may be produced by characters that are more like puppets than real beings. But the best comedies are well constructed, the fun lying in humorous situations and in witty conversations that may or may not have anything to do with the progress of the plot.

Shakespeare is a master in comedy as in tragedy, and *Much Ado about Nothing* is one of his best creations. Here there is a malicious main plot, carried out successfully, nearly to a tragic end but finally frustrated by the blundering stupidity of a man who never knew how great a thing he was doing. There are at least three other secondary plots but each of these is good-natured, amusing and successful. In this respect the play is not unusual, for plotting and counterplotting are common devices for securing comic effect. But it

## Comedy

is unusual that in addition to these plots the dramatist should have created in this one play three most remarkable living characters, and that the conversation of two of them should sparkle with wit to this day undimmed, while the arrant stupidity of the third has never been equaled in literature. More than this, these three characters dominate the whole situation though they are not directly concerned in the principal plot. The ignorant constable does, it is true, assist in the happy outcome, but he does it in spite of himself, and then not until by his astounding conceit he has allowed much mischief to be done. Take out Beatrice, Benedick and Dogberry and there remains just enough to show how little was the nothing which the much ado was about.

To show the humorous side of Shakespeare's writings and to give opportunity for character study of a different type from that furnished in *Macbeth*, we print nearly all of the scenes in which Beatrice, Benedick and Dogberry appear. The text is accompanied by notes, explanations and questions which will give sufficient direction to the study.

## Much Ado about Nothing

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Leonato, governor of Messina, with his daughter Hero and his niece Beatrice, meets in the street before his house a messenger who tells of the near approach of Don Pedro, Prince of Aragon, just returning from victorious war. With him are two gallant and favorite nobles, Claudio, a Florentine, who has an uncle in Messina, and Benedick, a Paduan.

*Beatrice.* I pray you, is Signior Montanto<sup>1</sup> returned from the wars or no?

*Messenger.* I know none of that name, lady; there was none such in the army of any sort.

*Leonato.* What is he that you ask for, niece?

*Hero.* My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

*Messenger.* O, he's returned; and as pleasant as ever he was.

*Beatrice.* He set up his bills<sup>2</sup> here in Messina and challenged Cupid at the flight;<sup>3</sup> and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, sub-

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1. *Montanto* was a term used in fencing. It means an upward cut or thrust. A sarcastic allusion to Benedick's affected wit or his doubtful bravery.

2. He put up notices.

3. To shoot with long, slender arrows requiring great skill.



### Much ado about Nothing

scribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt.<sup>4</sup> I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for indeed I promised to eat all of his killing.

*Leonato.* Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you,<sup>5</sup> I doubt it not.

*Messenger.* He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

*Beatrice.* You had musty victual, and he hath holp<sup>6</sup> to eat it: he is a very valiant trencher-man;<sup>7</sup> he hath an excellent stomach.

*Messenger.* And a good soldier too, lady.

*Beatrice.* And a good soldier to a lady; but what is he to a lord?

*Messenger.* A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuffed with all honorable virtues.

*Beatrice.* It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man: but for the stuffing,—well, we are all mortal.

*Leonato.* You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt

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4. Fools would shoot with thick, blunt arrows at short range. The intimation is that Benedick's wit is a fool's wit!

5. He'll keep even with you; that is, he is as witty as you are.

6. Helped.

7. A hearty eater.

## Much Ado about Nothing

Signior Benedick and her; they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

*Beatrice.* Alas! he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits<sup>8</sup> went halting off, and now is the whole man governed with one: So that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature.—Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

*Messenger.* Is't possible?

*Beatrice.* Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.<sup>9</sup>

*Messenger.* I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.<sup>10</sup>

*Beatrice.* No; an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion? Is there no young squarer<sup>11</sup> now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

*Messenger.* He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

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8. His five senses.

9. Fashion. A hat block is the form upon which hats are molded.

10. Not in your favor. The word is still used in the sense of *recording*. Servants were entered *in the books* of their masters.

11. Brawler. To *square off* still means to assume a fighting position.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

*Beatrice.* O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease; he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere he be cured.

Don Pedro and others enter and exchange greetings.

*Beatrice.* I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick; nobody marks you.

*Benedick.* What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

*Beatrice.* Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

*Benedick.* Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for, truly, I love none.

*Beatrice.* A dear happiness to women; they would have else been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humor for that; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

*Benedick.* God keep your ladyship still in that mind ! so some gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratched face.

*Beatrice.* Scratching could not make it worse, an't were such a face as yours.

*Benedick.* Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

*Beatrice.* A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

*Benedick.* I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, o' God's name; I have done.

*Beatrice.* You always end with a jade's<sup>12</sup> trick; I know you of old.

Later, the others having retired, Claudio and Benedick converse.

*Claudio.* Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?

*Benedick.* I noted her not; but I looked on her.

*Claudio.* Is she not a modest young lady?

*Benedick.* Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex ?

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<sup>12</sup>. A jade was a balky horse.

## Much Ado about Nothing

*Claudio.* No; I pray thee speak in sober judgment.

*Benedick.* Why, i' faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise: only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

*Claudio.* Thou thinkest I am in sport; I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her.

*Benedick.* Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

*Claudio.* Can the world buy such a jewel?

*Benedick.* Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow?<sup>13</sup> or do you play the flouting Jack,<sup>14</sup> to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder and Vulcan a rare carpenter?<sup>15</sup> Come, in what key shall a man take you, to go in the song?<sup>16</sup>

*Claudio.* In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

*Benedick.* I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter; there's her cousin,<sup>17</sup>

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13. Are you serious?

14. Do you mock us?

15. Cupid is called the blind god and Vulcan was a blacksmith.

16. If he is to accompany your singing?

17. Beatrice.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

*Claudio.* I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

*Benedick.* Is't come to this, i' faith? Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i' faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it and sigh away Sundays.<sup>18</sup>

Don Pedro returns and Claudio tells of his love for Hero, Benedick joining in the conversation.

*Claudio.* That I love her, I feel.

*Don Pedro.* That she is worthy, I know.

*Benedick.* That I neither feel how she should be loved nor know how she should be unworthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me; I will die in it at the stake.

*Don Pedro.* Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

*Claudio.* And never could maintain his part but in the force of his will.

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<sup>18</sup>. Be a puritan.

### Much ado about Nothing

*Benedick.* That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine<sup>19</sup> is (for the which I may go the finer<sup>20</sup>), I will live a bachelor.

*Don Pedro.* I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

*Benedick.* With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love; prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up for the sign of blind Cupid.

*Don Pedro.* Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.<sup>21</sup>

*Benedick.* If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat and shoot at me; and he that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulders and called Adam.<sup>22</sup>

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19. End.

20. Because of which I may be more finely dressed.

21. A capital subject for ridicule.

22. It is probable that cats were sometimes suspended in this way for a mark. Adam Bell was an English archer, famous for his marksmanship.

## Much Ado about Nothing

*Don Pedro.* Well, as time shall try;<sup>23</sup>  
“In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.”<sup>24</sup>

*Benedick.* The savage bull may, but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, let me be vilely painted, and in such great letters as they write “*Here is good horse to hire*” let them signify under my sign “*Here you may see Benedick the married man.*”

*Claudio.* If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horn-mad.

Don Pedro promises to aid Claudio to secure Hero, who is Leonato's only child. Leonato readily consents to the union when he is told of Claudio's love and at a masquerade Don Pedro, disguised as Claudio, wins her love, so that all is going well. But Don John, a bastard brother of Don Pedro, is very jealous of Claudio's advancement and threatens to ruin him. In his plan he has the assistance of Borachio, who is intimate with Margaret, Hero's maid, and the plotters determine to have Margaret personate Hero at her window and while there Borachio is to make love to her. Don Pedro and Claudio are to be led to see the two and to believe in the disgrace of Hero. In the meantime Beatrice has railed at Benedick, has sneered at marriage for herself and others. To Hero she said:

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<sup>23</sup>. Let it be as time shall determine.

<sup>24</sup>. This sentence is a quotation from an old play.



## **Much Ado about Nothing**

The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time; if the prince be too important,<sup>25</sup> tell him there is measure<sup>26</sup> in everything, and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero; wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace; the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly-modest, as a measure, full of state and ancientry;<sup>27</sup> and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinque-pace<sup>28</sup> faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Benedick has been no less severe:

O, she misused me past the endurance of a block! an oak with but one green leaf on it would have answered her; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me,<sup>29</sup> not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester, that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance<sup>30</sup> upon

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25. Importunate.

26. A solemn dance.

27. Stately like the old-time minuet.

28. A dance in which the steps were numbered by fives.

29. This was at the masquerade and Beatrice doubtless knew very well to whom she was speaking.

30. Rapidity.

### **Much ado about Nothing**

me that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations,<sup>31</sup> there were no living near her; she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed; she would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her; you shall find her the infernal Ate<sup>32</sup> in good apparel. I would to God some scholar<sup>33</sup> would conjure her; for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither: so, indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follows her.

Don Pedro seeing how matters stand "undertakes one of Hercules' labors; which is to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one with the other."

Benedick has just sneered at Claudio's weakness and has said:

I will not be sworn but love may transform

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31. Term-words.

32. Ate was a daughter of Jupiter and the goddess of mischief, a fury.

33. Latin was used in exorcising evil spirits.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what color it please God.<sup>34</sup>

Then he overhears Don Pedro and others telling how much in love with him Beatrice is, how scornful and cruel Benedick is and how sadly they fear that she will die rather than show her love. The effect this has on Benedick may be seen by what he says after their conversation has ceased.

*Benedick.* This can be no trick; the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady; it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say

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<sup>34</sup> Her hair shall be the natural color, not dyed as was then customary.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she would rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry; I must not seem proud; happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness: and virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it: and wise, but for loving me; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit,<sup>85</sup> nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage; but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humor? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.— Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady; I do spy some marks of love in her.

*Enter Beatrice.*

*Beatrice.* Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

**Much Ado about Nothing.**

**Benedick.** Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

**Beatrice.** I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me; if it had been painful, I would not have come.

**Benedick.** You take pleasure then in the message?

**Beatrice.** Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point and not choke a daw withal.—You have no stomach, signior; fare you well.

**Benedick.** Ha! "*Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner;*" there's a double meaning in that. "*I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me;*" that's as much as to say, Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks. If I do not take pity of<sup>35</sup> her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew.<sup>37</sup> I will go get her picture.

Beatrice is caused to overhear a similar conversation between Hero and her maids, in which Benedick is reported desperately in love with her and she is severely criticised for her cruelty. Her words after they have left are :

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35. Wisdom.

36. On.

37. A term of contempt.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

What fire is in mine ears?<sup>38</sup> Can this be true?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?

Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!

No glory lives behind the back of such.<sup>39</sup>

And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,  
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand;<sup>40</sup>

If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee

To bind our loves up in a holy band;  
For others say thou dost deserve, and I  
Believe it better than reportingly.<sup>41</sup>

Don John's plot progresses as rapidly as the harmless one of his brother. Claudio, convinced of Hero's guilt, plans a terrible revenge. He waits till he meets Hero at the altar and then in the midst of the ceremony accuses her of most heartless falsity and wickedness. Powerless to defend herself, Hero faints, is borne away, and

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38. Why do my ears burn? We often say that some one is talking of us, if our ears tingle.

39. People never say anything good of the proud and contemptuous.

40. As a falcon was tamed to ride upon the hand of his master when hunting.

41. More than by mere hearsay.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

subsequently it is announced to Claudio and others that she has died of grief. Beatrice and Benedick are left alone and the following conversation takes place between them:

*Benedick.* Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

*Beatrice.* Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

*Benedick.* I will not desire that.

*Beatrice.* You have no reason; I do it freely.

*Benedick.* Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

*Beatrice.* Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!

*Benedick.* Is there any way to show such friendship!

*Beatrice.* A very even way, but no such friend.

*Benedick.* May a man do it?

*Beatrice.* It is a man's office, but not yours.

*Benedick.* I do love nothing in the world so well as you; is not that strange?

*Beatrice.* As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you: but believe me

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing.—I am sorry for my cousin.

*Benedick.* By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

*Beatrice.* Do not swear by it, and eat it.

*Benedick.* I will swear by it that you love me; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

*Beatrice.* Will you not eat your word?

*Benedick.* With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest I love thee.

*Beatrice.* Why; then, God forgive me!

*Benedick.* What offense, sweet Beatrice?

*Beatrice.* You have stayed me in a happy hour; I was about to protest I loved you.

*Benedick.* And do it with all thy heart.

*Beatrice.* I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.

*Benedick.* Come, bid me do anything for thee.

*Beatrice.* Kill Claudio.

*Benedick.* Ha! not for the wide world.

*Beatrice.* You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

*Benedick.* Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

*Beatrice.* I am gone, though I am here;<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>. We must imagine that Beatrice starts to leave. Benedick detains her and then she says, "My heart is gone though my body remains."



### **Much Ado about Nothing**

there is no love in you.—Nay, I pray you, let me go.

*Benedick.* Beatrice,—

*Beatrice.* In faith, I will go.

*Benedick.* We'll be friends first.

*Beatrice.* You dare easier be friends with with me than fight with mine enemy.

*Benedick.* Is Claudio thine enemy?

*Beatrice.* Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonored my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand<sup>43</sup> until they come to take hands;<sup>44</sup> and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancor,—O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market place.

*Benedick.* Hear me, Beatrice,—

*Beatrice.* Talk with a man out of a window!<sup>45</sup> A proper saying!

*Benedick.* Nay, but, Beatrice,—

*Beatrice.* Sweet Hero! She is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

*Benedick.* Beat—

*Beatrice.* Princes and counties!<sup>46</sup> Surely,

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43. Keep her in expectation.

44. At the altar during the wedding ceremony, as Claudio did.

45. This was one of the accusations against Hero and was what Claudio supposed he saw her do.

46. Counts.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Confect;<sup>47</sup> a sweet gallant, surely! O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend who would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies,<sup>48</sup> valor into compliment and men are only turned into tongue, and trim<sup>49</sup> ones too; he is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie and swears it.—I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

*Benedick.* Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

*Beatrice.* Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

*Benedick.* Think you in your soul that Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?

*Beatrice.* Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

*Benedick.* Enough, I am engaged;<sup>50</sup> I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me so think of me.

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47. A sugar count! Claudio was a man of fine appearance and delicate tastes.

48. Mere forms of politeness.

49. Apt or fine, used ironically.

50. Pledged.

## **Much Ado about Nothing**

While this is going on, very different events have been happening elsewhere. The village constable Dogberry, and the men of his watch have not been idle. First they are seen in the street at night.

*Dogberry.* Are you good men and true?

*Verges.* Yea, or else it were a pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

*Dogberry.* Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the Prince's watch.

*Verges.* Well, give them their charge, neighbor Dogberry.

*Dogberry.* First, who think you the most desartless<sup>51</sup> man to be constable?

*First Watch.* Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacole; for they can write and read.

*Dogberry.* Come hither, neighbor Seacole. God hath blessed you with a good name; to be a well-favored<sup>52</sup> man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.

*Second Watch.* Both which, master constable,—

*Dogberry.* You have; I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favor, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it; and

51. Dogberry's misuse of words is one of his most notable traits.

52. Good looking.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

for your reading and writing, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore bear you the lantern.<sup>53</sup> This is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrom men;<sup>54</sup> you are to bid any man stand, in the Prince's name.

*Second Watch.* How if a' will not stand?

*Dogberry.* Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together and thank God you are rid of a knave.

*Verges.* If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the Prince's subjects.

*Dogberry.* True, and they are to meddle with none but the Prince's subjects.—You shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and to talk is most tolerable<sup>55</sup> and not to be endured.

*Second Watch.* We will rather sleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch.

*Dogberry.* Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman; for I cannot see how sleeping should offend; only, have a care

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53. A lantern, a bill and a bell was the usual equipment of the watch. A bill was a long-handled hatchet or halberd bearing a hooked point.

54. He means, you shall apprehend or arrest all vagrants.

55. He means intolerable.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

that your bills<sup>55</sup> be not stolen. Well, you are to call at all the ale-houses, and bid them that are drunk get them to bed.

*Second Watch.* How if they will not?

*Dogberry.* Why, then, let them alone until they are sober; if they make you not then the better answer, you may say that they are not the men you took them for.

*Second Watch.* Well, sir.

*Dogberry.* If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true<sup>56</sup> man; and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

*Second Watch.* If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

*Dogberry.* Truly, by your office, you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defiled: the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

*Verges.* You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

*Dogberry.* Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

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<sup>56</sup>. Honest.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

*Verges.* If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.

*Second Watch.* How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?

*Dogberry.* Why, then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baas will never answer a calf when he bleats.

*Verges.* 'Tis very true.

*Dogberry.* This is the end of the charge; you, constable, are to present<sup>57</sup> the Prince's own person; if you meet the Prince in the night, you may stay him.

*Verges.* Nay, by'r lady, that I think a' cannot.

*Dogberry.* Five shillings to one on 't, with any man that knows the statutes,<sup>58</sup> he may stay him: marry, not without the Prince be willing; for indeed, the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offense to stay a man against his will.

*Verges.* By'r lady, I think it be so.

*Dogberry.* Ha, ah-ha! Well, masters, good night. An there be any matter of weight chances,<sup>59</sup> call up me: keep your fellows'

<sup>57.</sup> He means *represent*.

<sup>58.</sup> Statutes.

<sup>59.</sup> If anything of importance happens.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

counsels and your own; and good night.  
Come, neighbor.

*Second Watch.* Well, masters, we hear our charge; let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed.

*Dogberry.* One word more, honest neighbors. I pray you, watch about Signior Leonato's door; for, the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil<sup>60</sup> to-night. Adieu; be vigilant,<sup>61</sup> I pray you.

Conrade and Borachio enter and the latter describes the dastardly plot against Hero and its villainous success. This is overheard by Dogberry and his watch who take the two men prisoners. Dogberry goes to Leonato's house and reports his capture:

*Leonato.* What would you with me, honest neighbor?

*Dogberry.* Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you that decerns you nearly.

*Leonato.* Brief, I pray you; for you see it is a busy time with me.

*Dogberry.* Marry, this it is, sir.

*Verres.* Yes, in truth it is, sir.

*Leonato.* What is it, my good friends?

*Dogberry.* Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a

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60. Confusion or tumult.

61. He means vigilant.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

little off the matter:<sup>62</sup> an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

*Verges.* Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living that is an old man and no honester than I.

*Dogberry.* Comparisons are odorous; palabras,<sup>63</sup> neighbor Verges.

*Leonato.* Neighbors, you are tedious.

*Dogberry.* It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's<sup>64</sup> officers; but truly, for my own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find it in my heart to bestow it all upon your worship.

*Leonato.* All thy tediousness on me, ah?

*Dogberry.* Yea, an't were a thousand pound more than 'tis; for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city; and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

*Verges.* And so am I.

*Leonato.* I would fain know what you have to say.

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62. A little astray, a little off the subject.

63. A Spanish phrase *pocas palabras* means *a few words*. We use a corrupted form of the latter word in *palaver*.

64. He means *the Duke's poor officers*.



**Much Ado about Nothing.**

*Verges.* Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

*Dogberry.* A good old man, sir; he will be talking; as they say, when the age is in, the wit is out.<sup>65</sup> God help us! it is a world to see.<sup>66</sup> — Well said, i' faith, neighbor Verges: well God's a good man; an<sup>67</sup> two men ride on a horse, one must ride behind.—An honest soul, i' faith, sir; by my troth he is, as ever broke bread; but God is to be worshiped; all men are not alike; alas, good neighbor!

*Leonato.* Indeed, neighbor, he comes too short of you.

*Dogberry.* Gifts that God gives.

*Leonato.* I must leave you.

*Dogberry.* One word, sir: our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two auspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

*Leonato.* Take their examination yourself and bring it me; I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

*Dogberry.* It shall be suffigance.<sup>68</sup>

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65. The proverb is, when the wine is in, the wit is out.

66. Wonderful to see.

67. If.

68. He means *sufficient*.

## Much Ado about Nothing

Dogberry proceeds to the prison and interrogates his prisoners after this fashion:

*Dogberry.* Is your whole dissembly appeared?

*Verges.* O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton.

*Sexton.* Which be the malefactors?

*Dogberry.* Marry, that am I and my partner.

*Verges.* Nay, that's certain; we have the exhibition to examine.<sup>69</sup>

*Sexton.* But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before master constable.

*Dogberry.* Yea, marry, let them come before me.—What is your name, friend?

*Borachio.* Borachio.

*Dogberry.* Pray, write down, Borachio.—Yours, sirrah?

*Conrade.* I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

*Dogberry.* Write down, master gentleman Conrade.—Masters, do you serve God?

*Conrade.* } Yea, sir, we hope.  
*Borachio.* }

*Dogberry.* Write down, that they hope they serve God; and write God first, for God

<sup>69</sup> He means an examination to exhibit.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

defend but God should go before such villains !  
— Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

*Conrade.* Marry, sir, we say we are none.

*Dogberry.* A marvelous witty fellow, I assure you; but I will go about with him. — Come you hither, sirrah; a word in your ear; sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

*Borachio.* Sir, I say to you, we are none.

*Dogberry.* Well, stand aside,— 'fore God, they are both in a tale.<sup>70</sup> Have you writ down, that they are none?

*Sexton.* Master constable, you go not the way to examine; you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

*Dogberry.* Yea, that's the eftest way.<sup>71</sup> Let the watch come forth.— Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men.

*First Watch.* This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother was a villain.

*Dogberry.* Write down Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother a villain.

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70. They agree. Both tell the same story.

71. The quickest or easiest way.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

*Borachio.* Master constable,—

*Dogberry.* Pray thee, fellow, peace; I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

*Sexton.* What heard you him say else?

*Second Watch.* Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

*Dogberry.* Flat burglary as ever was committed.

*Verges.* Yea, by the mass, that it is.

*Sexton.* What else, fellow?

*First Watch.* And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

*Dogberry.* O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

*Sexton.* What else?

*Watch.* This is all.

*Sexton.* And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away; Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died.— Master constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's; I will go before and show him their examination.

*Dogberry.* Come, let them be opinioned.

*Verges.* Let them be in the hands—

### **Much ado about Nothing**

*Conrade.* Off, coxcomb!

*Dogberry.* God's my life, where's the sexton? Let him write down the Prince's officer coxcomb.—Come, bind them, — thou naughty<sup>72</sup> varlet!

*Conrade.* Away! you are an ass, you are an ass.

*Dogberry.* Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! — But, masters, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass.— No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow, and, which is more, an officer; and, which is more, a householder; and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina, and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns and everything handsome about him.— Bring him away.— O that I had been writ down an ass!

The capture of the conspirators clears Hero, who is not dead but has been concealed by friends

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72. The word then meant *vile*, *wicked*.

### **Much Ado about Nothing**

who were confident of her innocence. All is happily adjusted between her and Claudio. Don John flees, is recaptured and his punishment deferred. Beatrice and Benedick meet:

*Benedick.* Do you not love me ?

*Beatrice.* Why, no; no more than reason.

*Benedick.* Why, then your uncle and the prince and Claudio

Have been deceived; they swore you did.

*Beatrice.* Do not you love me ?

*Benedick.* Troth, no; no more than reason.

*Beatrice.* Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula

Are much deceived; for they did swear you did.

*Benedick.* They swore that you were almost sick for me.

*Beatrice.* They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

*Benedick.* 'Tis no such matter.— Then you do not love me ?

*Beatrice.* No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

*Leonato.* Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

*Claudio.* And I'll be sworn upon 't that he loves her;

For here's a paper written in his hand,

**Much Ado about Nothing**

A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,  
Fashion'd to Beatrice.

*Hero.* And here's another,  
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her  
pocket,  
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

*Benedick.* A miracle! here's our own  
hands against our hearts.—Come, I will have  
thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity.

*Beatrice.* I would not deny you; but, by  
this good day, I yield upon great persuasion;  
and partly to save your life, for I was told you  
were in a consumption.

*Benedick.* Peace! I will stop your mouth.

[*Kissing her.*]

*Don Pedro.* How dost thou, Benedick, the  
married man?

*Benedick.* I'll tell thee what, prince; a  
college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of  
my humor. Dost thou think I care for a  
satire or an epigram? No; if a man will be  
beaten with brains, he shall wear nothing  
handsome about him. In brief, since I do  
propose to marry, I will think nothing to any  
purpose that the world can say against it; and  
therefore never flout at me for what I have  
said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and  
this is my conclusion.

## Studies

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The questions following should be studied seriously. Do not, after having read once the extracts from the play, think yourself able to answer the questions offhand, even though they seem simple. Take each question by itself, and running over the dialogues come to a conclusion based on some definite portion of what you have read. Imagine yourself present during these conversations and give to each person a form, dress and appearance to correspond with his speech.

When you have formulated your answers to the questions write a description of the people as they appear to you and an analysis of their characters.

### DOGBERRY

How many instances can you find of a misuse of words? Is there any method in his misuse of words, that is, does he merely substitute one word for another or is he caught by similarity in sound? Are you ever in doubt as to the word he should use? Are his ideas clear and the mistake merely one in expression?



### **Much Ado about Nothing**

Is Dogberry conceited? Is he ignorant or stupid or both? Is he tedious? Is he a well-meaning fellow? Does he try to do his duty honestly? In his charge to the watch is he in earnest or in fun? What is his chief characteristic?

Do you feel contempt for him or merely amusement? Are you irritated by his blunders or pleased by them? Are you glad to know Dogberry?

Did Shakespeare feel contempt for him or was he merely playing with him?

### **BENEDICK AND BEATRICE**

Is Benedick good-looking, well-dressed and of pleasant manners? Is he brave, kind, sympathetic and a good friend? Has he a good judgment and is he quick to act? Is Beatrice beautiful? What is her style of beauty? Is she sympathetic? Does she love her cousin? Is she easily aroused by injustice? Did she ever do anything to show that she had a true womanly nature?

Do their friends regard them highly? Do their friends think them unkind and too severe? Are they really unamiable? Would you call Beatrice a scold? Do they think others enjoy their wit? Does the presence of others help their wit? Are they sensitive when their wit is not appreciated or when they are beaten in their exchange of

## Studies

witticisms? Is their wit the main principle of their lives? Can they lay aside their love of repartee and be serious when the occasion demands it?

Is their wit similar? Which flashes the more brilliantly? Which seems the more studied? Does the presence of Beatrice make Benedick more witty? Does the presence of Benedick seem to help the wit of Beatrice?

Does their wit consist largely of plays upon words? Are there allusions to humorous incidents? Do they indulge in ridicule of personal peculiarities? Does each ridicule in the other the things that are unavoidable, for which the person is in no way to blame?

Is there anything ludicrous in the behavior of any person? Does Shakespeare put any of the characters in amusing or embarrassing situations in order to excite the laughter of his audience? Does any of the comic effect in the selections depend upon the situation or is it always in the persons and their speeches?

## Supplementary Readings

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*Macbeth* is but one of a number of great tragedies written by Shakespeare, and the student must not think he has an acquaintance with the great master's tragic art, till he has read in addition at least *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Similarly, to know Shakespeare's power as a writer of comedy he must be studied in the *Merchant of Venice*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *Twelfth Night*. If all these, both tragedies and comedies, be read thoughtfully in the light of the studies pursued in the two dramas taken as types, some idea may be gained of the marvelous powers of the many-sided Shakespeare. At the same time the student will understand why dramatic poetry deserves the high rank it is given by discerning critics.

Shakespeare is not the only dramatist, but he is so incomparably greater than any other that comparisons are always trying to the lesser writer. Still there are such entertaining plays as Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, Sheridan's *The Rivals*, and Bulwer-Lytton's *Richelieu* that will be worth while to read when the opportunity offers.



*OPHELIA*

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## William Shakespeare

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"A rib of Shakespeare would have made a Milton; the same portion of Milton all poets born ever since." — *Walter Savage Landor.*

"That he lived, and that he died, and that he was a little lower than the angels" is De Quincey's summing up of Shakespeare's life. And after all, these few words tell as much as we really need to know about the biography of the greatest dramatist. In reading many works of literature, the life of the author is essential to complete understanding, but in the case of Shakespeare's dramas this is not true. The plays are so universal and the study of human passions, in their weakness and in their strength, is so extensive and widely applicable that we read them for their own sake. Hamlet is Hamlet, Lear is Lear, Portia is Portia, no one of them is ever Shakespeare. The personality of the author does not enter into the character of these creations. It is for this reason that we can ignore the question of Bacon's authorship of Shakespeare's plays, though it will always seem improbable to the casual reader that the man who wrote Bacon's Essays should have written the sublime dramas known as Shakespeare's. For our purpose the life of William Shakespeare, Gentle-

## William Shakespeare

man, answers very well in satisfying whatever curiosity there may be about the author.

Briefly, the facts of Shakespeare's life are these : He was born at Stratford-on-Avon in 1564. His father, by energy and perseverance, had reached a position of considerable prominence in the affairs of his native town, but later in life lost his fortune. William, the third son, was educated at the common school of Stratford and in his nineteenth year married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a neighboring yeoman. In 1586 he went up to London and began his stage career. His first work was undoubtedly menial and his training in dramatic writing was gained by revising and re-editing already existing plays. In time, however, his own dramas were received with favor, and when he returned to Stratford later in life his fame was firmly established. He enjoyed the existence of a plain country gentleman until his death in 1616. The student may have noticed in his reading that the spelling of the name is uncertain. Shakespeare is the most popular method of spelling it, but Shakspeare is the way he spelled it himself on several existing documents.

As an actor Shakespeare was not particularly successful. From various contemporary allusions we know that he did take part in numerous dramas and appeared in his own productions. His advice to the players in Hamlet indicates a close acquaintance with the art of acting.

## William Shakespeare

It is as a dramatist however that we know him best. In his matchless compositions we see the overpowering genius of the man. Beyond all question, he was the greatest writer that ever lived. His complete works, comprising comedy, tragedy and history, run the gamut of human interests and emotions and appeal in one way or another to every intelligent reader. Whether we laugh with Falstaff, weep with Juliet, shudder with Titus Andronicus, or sympathize with Hamlet we feel that Shakespeare has touched in our bosoms every chord of humor, sympathy, pity and horror. The occasional criticism or complaint we hear about his writings affects not at all our admiration for the grandeur of his work. His contemporaries evinced great respect for him. Ben Jonson, one of the brightest minds of his time, says at the close of a conservative estimate of Shakespeare's genius: "But hee redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was more in him to be prayed than to be pardoned." Robert Greene was ludicrously jealous of Shakespeare's superior abilities. He calls him "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers that with his Tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you." Aubrey tells us that his person was handsome and well shaped, that he was good company and "of a very ready and pleasant and smooth wit." Thus we see that his



## William Shakespeare

physical appearance was in keeping with the beauty of his intellect, a description which does not apply to all great men.

Shakespeare, living as he did in the Elizabethan era, knew many great men; Ben Jonson and Fletcher were his associates and friends; the Earl of Southampton was in a way his Mæcenas and to this nobleman was dedicated the first product of his pen, the poem *Venus and Adonis*. We have no record of an intimacy or acquaintance with Francis Bacon. It is pleasing to note that he enjoyed the favor of Queen Elizabeth and even more the recognition of King James I.

But let us not think of Shakespeare wholly as a playwright, actor, and man of letters. After weathering the gale of shifting success in the great capital, he was content to end his days in the quiet waters of retirement. He always retained in his heart a warm affection for the place of his birth, and when in later life he had won fame and fortune he purchased an estate in Stratford and settled down to calm enjoyment of rural life. It is recorded he introduced the mulberry tree among his fellow townsmen, re-established the fallen fortunes of his father, and with considerable prudence and business ability conducted several successful lawsuits against fraudulent debtors. The descendants of our great poet were few in number and in 1760 there died the last of his immediate line. William Black makes Shakespeare's daughter Judith the heroine of one of his novels.

## William Shakespeare

If the reader of Shakespeare's plays will take them up in approximately chronological order he can derive more pleasure from them than if he read them in a haphazard manner; and moreover he can trace for himself in a great measure the development of Shakespeare's genius and skill. All the plays mentioned below are typical and should be read by those who wish to obtain a thorough knowledge of Shakespeare's dramatic work. The exact date of composition of many plays is doubtful, but by applying certain tests, such as historical allusions, growth of metrical skill, development in style, language and characterization, and dates in the Stationers' Register, careful investigators are able to arrange the dramas in four great groups typifying four periods in the life of the poet.

The first group contains among others *The Comedy of Errors*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Richard III*. It marks his apprenticeship in dramatic construction and deals in the main with love and light comedy.

The second group shows his complete mastery of comedy, his studies in English history, and his beginnings in tragedy. *The Merchant of Venice*, 1594, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Romeo and Juliet*, 1592, are the chief plays.

Then came the dark period in Shakespeare's life when public and private troubles led him to look on the gloomy side of life. But his power was at its height and we are given such sublime tragedies as *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Julius Caesar*.

## William Shakespeare

The fourth period embraces his peaceful declining years. His tragedies end satisfactorily, and with a feeling of calm content and intellectual pleasure the reader lays down his Shakespeare with such plays as *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*.

"I think most readers of Shakespeare sometimes find themselves thrown into exalted conditions, like that produced by music. They may drop the book to pass at once into the region of thought without words."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.



*EDWARD H. SOTHERN AS HAMLET*

1. The first step is to identify the problem.

## Review Questions

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1. Compare the humor of the porter in *Macbeth* with that of Dogberry. Can you see any likeness in the two men?

2. Decide which of the scenes in *Macbeth* is the most important in the development of Macbeth's character.

3. Take one of the shorter poems in the tenth number and make a complete analysis of its structure.

4. Decide which of the poems in the tenth number is the most musical and at the same time in which one the meter is the most harmonious with the subject.

5. What are the different forms of prose composition? Find examples of each in the preceding numbers.

6. Which of the authors you have so far studied seems to show his personality most in his writings?

7. Is it necessary to know anything about Shakespeare to fully appreciate *Macbeth*? Do you enjoy *Dream Children* more when you know something of the life of the author?

8. Do the divisions of the lines into sestet and octave follow divisions in thought? In which part of the sonnet is the thought the more general?

### **Review Questions**

9. Select and classify all the figures of speech in the sonnets from Mrs. Browning.

10. Determine thoughtfully which masterpiece, so far read, has given you the most pleasure; which the most inspiration; which the most food for thought.

## **Memoranda**

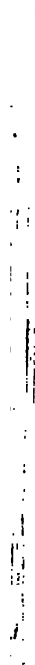




## **Memoranda**

## **Memoranda**











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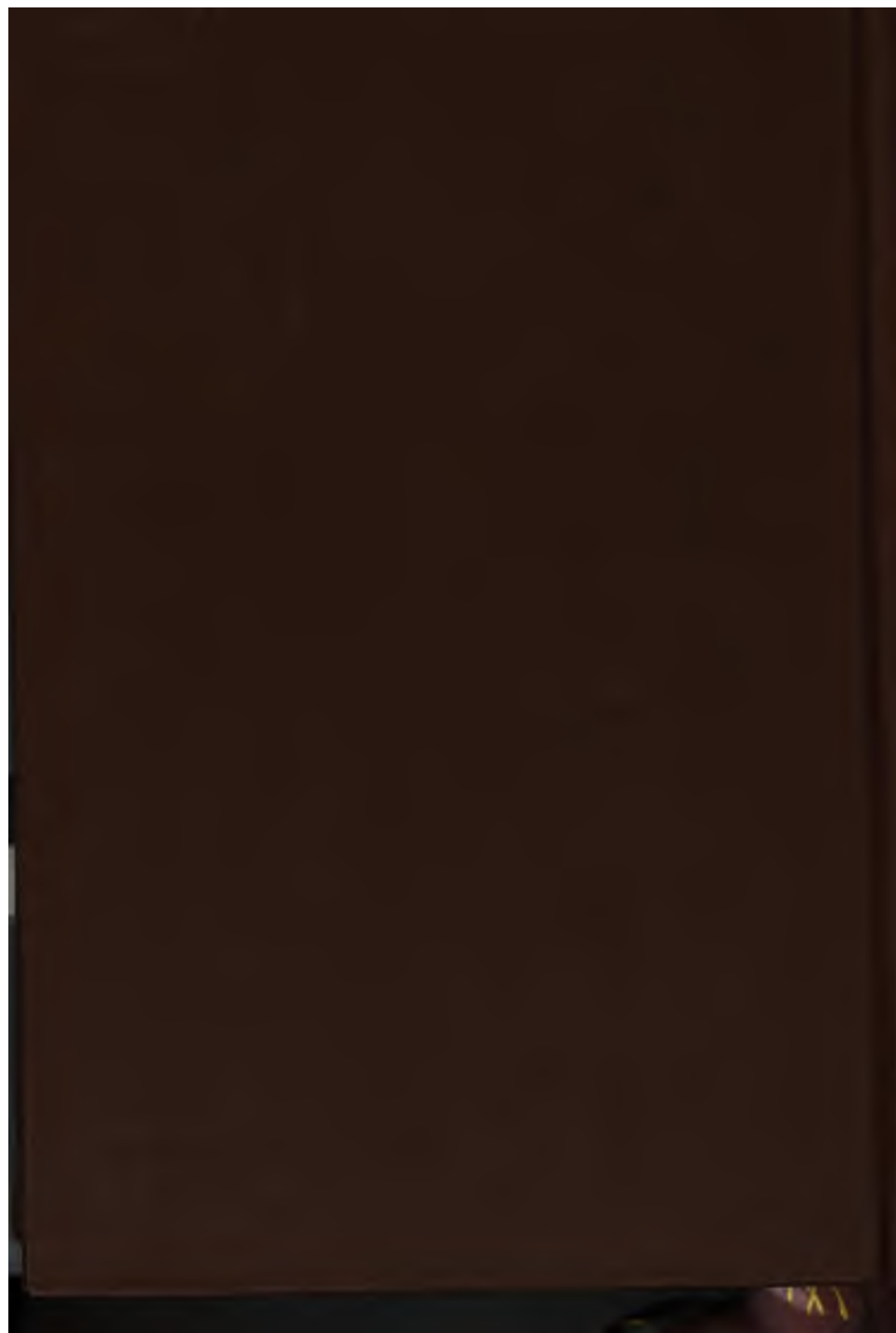
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English and American literature

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STRETFORD-ON-AVOX



*ELLEN TERRY AS LADY MACBETH*